BOGDAN D. FILOW

EARLY BULGARIAN ART

WITH 58 PLATES AND 72 ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

PAUL HAUPT — ACADEMICAL BOOK-STORE, FORMERLY MAX DRECHSEL — BERNE 1919

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BY

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PRINTED BY BÜHLER & WERDER, "ALTHOF", BERNE

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PREFACE

The chief interest of those scholars who have devoted themselves to the study of Bulgarian history has, almost entirely, centered round Bulgaria's political fate. The foundation of the Kingdom of Bulgaria, her unceasing struggles with Byzantium during the middle ages, the movement towards freedom of modern times, these were the most important problems to which writers of Bulgarian history, both at home and abroad, gave their principal attention. The internal life of the people, their growth as a civilized nation and their intellectual development, these were matters which received but little attention. Since the early Bulgarians were able to unite the Slav inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula into a strong and vigorous state, capable of successfully resisting the superior power of Byzantium, it has never been denied that the Bulgarian people possessed political gifts and warlike virtues. But their intellectual merits and artistic creative powers have never yet in the same degree received recognition. It is incorrect to consider it as proved that the Bulgarians took all their intellectual culture and material civilization from Byzantium and merely made it their own. The fact that the Bulgarians were the first of the Slavonic peoples to create a literature of their own which they transmitted to other Slavs, should of itself be sufficient proof that, in intellectual domain, they maintained their independence of Byzantium and endeavoured to preserve their own national character. They were also the first Slav nation to found an entirely independent national church.

The state of Bulgaria was, for a long time, the only great power in the Balkan Peninsula co-existant with the Byzantine Empire. Could the Bulgarians really have maintained this position for so long, if it had merely been built up on their military excellences? Was it not rather in a far greater measure to be attributed to the intellectual merits and moral powers of the people? Have not the Bulgarians made their own the land they inhabit by creating an independent national form of civilization? Do we not find over the whole country, in Danubian Bulgaria and Thrace as well as in Macedonia, numerous monuments of their past which prove to us the fact that this land was not only drenched with their blood for centuries, but also fertilized by their intellect? And finally have they not, in the higher intellectual spheres, produced much cultured work of lasting value which should assure them the right to exist as a civilized nation?

The best answer to these questions, which are of far greater importance for a nation's position and the respect it inspires than are its military qualifications, is to be found in the study of ancient Bulgarian monuments of art. For in this domain of study, it can best be seen that the ancient culture of the Bulgarians was, in a very high degree, independent and capable of development, that the Bulgarians were able

to achieve much that is of a purely ideal nature, and that not only politically, but also intellectually, they always took a leading part in the Balkan Peninsula. It is true that the last wars which the Bulgarian people waged — with such heavy losses — in order to set free and bring together all those of their own race, led to an unhappy issue for Bulgaria; but we are nevertheless justified in pointing out that the claims put forward by the Bulgarian people for national liberty and a better future are not based on their military success or on the love of power, but on the laws of humanity and civilization.

Some well-known foreign scholars have repeatedly pointed out the high archæological importance of Bulgarian monuments of art. The well-known Russian art historian Theodore Schmidt, who spent a long time in Bulgaria and who thoroughly investigated these monuments, gave it as his opinion that, "in Bulgaria it is not a question of any local form of Byzantine art, but of an art, which, influenced by Constantinople though not having originated there, proved itself so strong and vigorous, that even under Turkish rule it continued to flourish and to produce works of art of no small importance".

These monuments of art have been so difficult of access, that they remain till to-day almost entirely unknown even to men of learning. The necessity of making ancient Bulgarian art more widely known to the public has often been felt in Bulgaria. With this end in view a committee of scholars and artists has recently been formed in Sofia, consisting of the professors L. Miletitsh, J. Ivanov, N. Milev, A. Mitov, J. Mrkwitshka, B. Michailov and the author of the present volume. It is due to the combined efforts of these gentlemen that this book can be published. It may perhaps seem strange that it should appear in such unsettled times. But this will be understood when it is remembered that it springs from the hope for a better future, which will be built upon greater freedom and justice.

Whatever may be thought about this point, the monuments of art described in this book, many of which are presented to the public for the first time, are not without importance for knowledge, and knowledge knows nothing of national boundaries or political considerations. This fact would of itself suffice to justify the appearance of the present volume, in which the author has endeavoured to take a purely objective and scientific point of view.

Fig. 1. — Marble slab of a frieze from Preslav; 9th—10th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

I. THE FIRST KINGDOM OF BULGARIA

THE development of art in Bulgaria was very greatly affected by the geographical position of the country. Situated close to the most important centres of the culture of antiquity, where East and West meet, easily reached from the Black Sea on the east, and from the Aegean Sea on the south, Bulgaria was, from the beginning, an important meeting point for different artistic currents, the effects of which can easily be traced in the native art of Bulgaria.

Through the ancient Greek colonies, which lie along the coast, Greek art soon penetrated into Bulgaria, and it was especially the products of the Ionian art of Asia Minor which have here found their way into all parts of the country. But, at the same time, there existed in the interior a very highly developed native art born thither by the ancient Thracians. Only in the last few years, through the discoveries made in the burial mounds of southern Bulgaria, now to be seen in the National Museum in Sofia, have we been able to learn more about this art. It is peculiar in style, entirely different from Greek work, and reminds us of the Scythian objects of art found in the south of Russia. It is specially characterised by a great fondness for fantastic representations of animals. This double influence of Thracian and Greek art produced, during the last centuries before Christ, those numerous works of art which so often conceal a Thracian germ within a Greek form.

At the beginning of the first century after Christ, when Bulgaria became a Roman province, many Roman elements found their way into the country, brought in mainly by the Roman legions. This influence is very noticeable in the sculptures on tombs. The tombstones, which were at first very simple, became, in the course of time, more and more richly decorated, and we find creeping foliage, particularly vine-leaf ornament, playing a great part in their decoration. This activity in the realm of art which grew on native soil, but was very strongly influenced by Greek and Roman models, reached

its highest point of development in the second century after Christ. The productions of this period are those which most closely resemble the forms we may call classical and which are familiar to us through Greek-Roman art.

After the beginning of the third century we notice a new current setting in, distinguished by a greater degree of realism, and founded upon a closer observation of nature. Native art begins to be "barbarized", the classical antique features keep giving way before a rough, naive peasant art which continues to spread out over the entire country. We may associate this development with the growing immigration of foreigners south of the Danube. In the Greek colonies we certainly find, even at this period, work which is purely Greek in style, but, from the standpoint of the development of art, it is precisely those original barbaric art-productions which draw their inspiration from entirely different sources, that are of far greater importance. For they are big with a moral power and a great energy which carry with them more germs of a healthy life than are to be found in the cold academic perfections of the pure Greek productions of the same period. If the latter are but the remains of a glorious past, the former, with their stiff but lifelike figures, their solemn attitudes and conventional movements, show us the first stages of the later Byzantine style.

With the spread of Christianity new problems were put before art. A series of painted burial chambers, discovered mainly in Sofia, but also in other places in Bulgaria, prove the high standard of development reached in the tomb-paintings of the fourth century, which then replaced the earlier tombstones decorated with reliefs. But this new art accomplished the most in architecture. In Bulgaria we have a succession of magnificent church buildings, erected between the fourth and seventh centuries, which show a great diversity of forms. Besides the usual flat-roofed basilica with columns or pillars (Hissar-Bania, Mesembria, Belovo, Gradsko) we find the vaulted basilica with a cupola (church of St. Sophia in Sofia); the large basilica at Pirdop, also vaulted, certain parts of which have but recently been excavated, shows us, further, the rythmic alternation of columns and pillars which is so characteristic of the Romanesque architecture of the West. We find a different plan again in the ruins of the church in Klisse-Kioi and in the so-called red church at Perushtitza. The first of these two, whose foundation-walls have now been brought to light by excavation, has a regular cruciform groundplan, such as we often find in Asia Minor, with an extensive pillared court on the West side. The red church at Perushtitza, with its mighty conchas on which the cupola is supported, is a pronounced circular building, powerful in effect, the nearest approach to which is to be found in Armenia. In one case (Tshobandere) we find the horse-shoe apse — probably the only example in Europe — white another recently excavated church near Varna shows us all the different characteristics of the ancient Christian churches in Syria. From these and other examples we can easily see that the early Christian buildings in Bulgaria were greatly influenced by the contemporary architecture of the East.

This short summary of Bulgaria's earliest art, which belongs to the period preceding the establishment of the Kingdom of Bulgaria, also affords us the opportunity of a better understanding of ancient Bulgarian art. The intensive artistic activity of the

pre-Bulgarian era, which we can trace through the course of several centuries, created art traditions that even produced a strong after-effect in later periods.

* * *

It is generally admitted that the Kingdom of Bulgaria was founded in 679, when King Asparuch and his people crossed the Danube, and settled on Byzantine soil, in what is to-day known as the Dobrudja. In a succession of victorious battles the whole country between the Danube and the Balkans was soon conquered. The slav population, which had at an earlier period not only colonised this part of the country but also the whole of the Balkan peninsula, was easily united by the Bulgarians into one state which then had to try its strength in a perpetual struggle with the Byzantine empire.

If it is remembered how scanty our sources of information are for this period, and how contemptuously Byzantine writers looked down on the Bulgarians, considering them as an absolutely uncivilised people, it may almost seem presumptuous to write of the Bulgarian art of that period. And yet the excavations undertaken on the site of the ancient Bulgarian capital, Pliska, near the village Aboba in the north-east of Bulgaria (the Shumen district) prove, that art was not altogether neglected by the early Bulgarians. The two important buildings known as the large and the small palaces are the first to attract our attention. Apart from the unusual ground-plan the peculiar way they are constructed is especially worthy of attention. For the walls were, at least in their lower parts, built of large hewn stones, very well joined together, many layers of which are preserved until to-day.

We do not find in Bulgaria anything similar in the earlier architecture so that the two palaces of Aboba are quite alone of their kind. In the preceding early Christian period bricks were principally used for building — almost all the above mentioned churches are of brick construction — whereas in the Roman period, besides bricks, rubble-work was generally employed and only very rarely do we find small cut slabs used to mask the walls. We may therefore consider that the bold hewn-stone constructions such as we find in Aboba, were a style of architecture brought in by the Bulgarians, and characteristic of their oldest buildings. Traces of the same style of building are also to be found in the later Bulgarian capitals of Preslav and Tirnovo; but here again only in the earliest examples of fortification walls. The results of future researches alone can prove to us where this style of architecture originated. We content ourselves here with stating the fact that it is entirely unknown in the pre-Bulgarian period, and that it completely disappears again in the later Bulgarian era.

The palaces of Aboba are, however, not our only proofs of the building activity of the early Bulgarians. The same conception, which aims at a magnificent and powerful effect, is to be seen in the numerous monolithic columns found in or near Aboba, some of which are more than six meters high. They almost all bear detailed inscriptions with the name of King Omortag (814—831). The archaic way in which this

King, after the manner of the early oriental Lords, seeks to perpetuate in stone the story of his deeds and the memory of his companions, shows us a proud self-consciousness in a man having a high estimate of his own personality, full of creative joy and self reliance. One of the inscriptions gives us, among other details, an account of the construction of a bridge which was ornamented with brass lions. Here we can notice that the Bulgarians of that epoch were not satisfied with merely useful constructions, but that they also cared for their artistic decoration; and we see that they cared more for the fine arts than the notices of the hostile Byzantine authors or the existing monuments would lead us to believe.

Early Bulgarian monuments, as we have learnt to know them during the last few years, show us that the ancient culture of the Bulgarians was, when it first appeared in the Balkan peninsula, very highly developed and entirely independent. The generally accepted view, that the slavonic population of the peninsula was much more highly civilised than the ancient Bulgarians were, and that the Slaves were able to absorb the Bulgarians very rapidly and completely, is now proved to be incompatible with the facts. On the contrary, if the Bulgarians could so easily unite the scattered slavonic population into one powerful state, this was not only due to their better state-organisation, but also to their more highly developed civilisation, which we see reflected in their buildings.

The works of art belonging to this period are, it is true, very rare. The large relief carved high on a wall of rock near the village of Madara, not far from Aboba, is therefore all the more worthy of attention (Plate I). This relief which according to the inscription dates from the ninth century, shows us a Bulgarian King on a hunting expedition. The superficial execution of the sculpture — the disappearance of the detail is in part due to the effects of the weather — is to be explained by the high position in which the relief is placed. This relief is the only monument of its kind in Europe. If we look for similar work, the Sassanidian rock reliefs in Persia seem, in composition as well as in conception and execution the most nearly allied. Therefore, this monument too confirms what we were at first inclined to assume with regard to the original home of the Bulgarians, that is, that early Bulgarian art was Asiatic in origin.

In this connection, I should like to call attention to the magnificent gold state-vases, richly ornamented with varied scenes, which are to be found among the well known so-called "Attila treasure", now in the Hofmuseum in Vienna. Eminent Austrian and Hungarian scholars have pronounced them to be Bulgarian. If this can only be considered as conjecture at present, it cannot, on the other hand, be denied that the vases really do correspond to our conception of the earliest Bulgarian works of art.

The most distinctive feature of this art is its pronounced oriental character. In the earliest productions we find peculiarities of style and certain subjects which directly recall the East and cannot have come through Byzantium into Bulgaria, but which the early Bulgarians must have brought with them from their original home, over the north coast of the Black Sea. The oldest Bulgarian art, as is proved in the works of this period, appeared quite independent of Byzantium, although Byzantine influence very

soon made itself felt. In the course of time this influence grew stronger and stronger, but the oriental characteristics continue to be found. Without going into details, I will here restrict myself to calling attention to some of the earliest monuments, which bring before our eyes this process of the fusion of two different art-currents which takes place on Bulgarian soil.

I will first mention two slabs of red sandstone found near Stara-Zagora in south Bulgaria, dating from the seventh or eighth century (Plate II 1 and 2). The one represents a double-headed eagle, the other a lion. Both are in low relief, with sharply cut

Fig. 2. — Marble capital from Stara-Zagora; 7th—8th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

outlines, and are enclosed in a simple frame-border. The workmanship reminds us more of wood carving than of sculpture in stone. Very oriental in both these cases is the exceptionally marked conventional treatment of the animals, and the very symmetric composition of the eagle. The double-headed eagle is, indeed, considered to have originated in ancient Mesopotamian art, where we find it used as the emblem of the town of Lagash. In Byzantium it only appeared at a later date, and became widely used after the tenth century.

From Stara-Zagora we get a marble capital of about the same date; barbaric in execution, it represents an elephant attacked by a griffon (Fig. 2). Here too, we have a subject which can only have originated on oriental soil.

We will mention, further, the fragments of a marble frieze carved with animals, which was built into the ancient church of Drenovo near Prilep, in Macedonia. This church was thoroughly renovated in the fourteenth century. The frieze, as well as other architectural fragments built into the church, belongs to a much older building. On one of the frieze slabs (Plate II 4) we see a griffon whose wings are not parallel, as we usually see them represented; here, one wing is turned upwards and the other downwards. The same unusual position of the wings appears again in a bird on the frieze of the so-called Kharput door in Amida (Diyarbekir in Mesopotamia) of the year 909/910, and in a griffon on a frieze slab of the church at Skripù in Bœotia, dating from the years 873/874, which also shows Mesopotamian influence. In the second frieze slab of Drenovo (Plate II 3) the recumbent lion on the right of the cross is also particularly worthy of notice. The curiously distorted head of this lion is a very oriental feature, and is copied from the fantastic representations of animals, such as are to be found in the East.

It would be easy to multiply these examples. They are characteristic of the earliest Bulgarian art, which was developed on Byzantine soil, and for this reason they are worthy of our closest attention.

* * *

The glorious age of the first Bulgarian Kingdom was the reign of Czar Simeon the Great (888-927). Simeon, who had been educated in Constantinople, was not only a capable warrior and statesman, but also a great protector of art and science, and himself a writer. His residence was at Preslav in the north-east of Bulgaria. A contemporary Bulgarian author, Ivan Exarch, gives a short but very characteristic description of this town and the court which was exceptionally brilliant. Gold and silver, stones of different colours, marble and copper, wall-paintings and wood-carving were all used in profusion to decorate the different rooms. Of all this splendour scarcely anything remains. A few capitals (Fig. 3) and richly decorated slabs from a marble frieze, together with some less important architectural fragments, are all that exists. The frieze slabs are worth special attention (Fig. 1 and 4). Regularly divided into rectangular fields, strictly symmetrical in the composition of the ornament, very conventional with each leaf and palmette ornament sharply cut, they remind us of oriental types. The cross — the Bulgarians declared Christianity which had long before spread over the whole country, to be the state religion in 864 — already shows the influence of Byzantium, as it is also shown elsewhere in the ornamentation of the slabs. On the whole, however, these slabs still retain the original features of the earliest Bulgarian art.

To the same period belongs the foundation of a monastery, the ruins of which have been discovered on the top of a thickly wooded hill near Patleina, 7 kilometers south-east of Preslav. The church — its walls, buried under the earth, remain intact almost to their original height — is a quite insignificant building. But the interior was formerly partially covered with coloured glazed tiles; the discovery of these was one

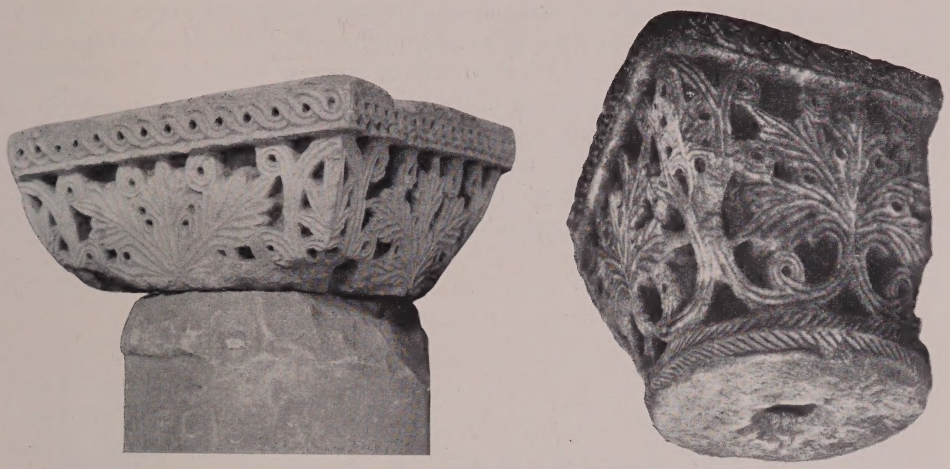

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Fig. 3. — Marble capitals from Preslav; 9th—10th cent.
Sofia, National Museum, and Preslav.

of the most important and unexpected revelations for the story of ancient art in Bulgaria. The ornamentation which reminds us in places of the frieze slabs of Preslav, is painted in various colours (red, yellow, green, light and dark brown) generally on a white ground and occasionally it is laid on in relief. The different tiles are unfortunately so very damaged that it has been impossible to reconstitute any single one entirely. The greater number served to mask the mouldings which were probably used to finish the walls along the top, and they are therefore curved accordingly. Besides the purely ornamental designs of flowers and plants we find animal and human forms introduced. The large picture of the head of a saint, apparently St. Theodore, composed of some similar tiles, is very worthy of notice (Plate XLIX).

Fig. 4. — Marble slabs of a frieze from Preslav; 9th—10th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

The glazed tiles of Patleina — and the way in which they are used — can best be compared to those found in the early Assyrian monuments. Although the Bulgarian discoveries are separated from the Assyrian work by so many centuries, it is striking to notice how similar the execution is in the two cases. We know that at a much later date, the covering of the walls with glazed tiles was re-introduced and employed in Mohamedan architecture so that we are fully justified in considering this manner of treating the walls as purely oriental. Here again we can recognise the close connection between ancient Bulgarian and oriental art.

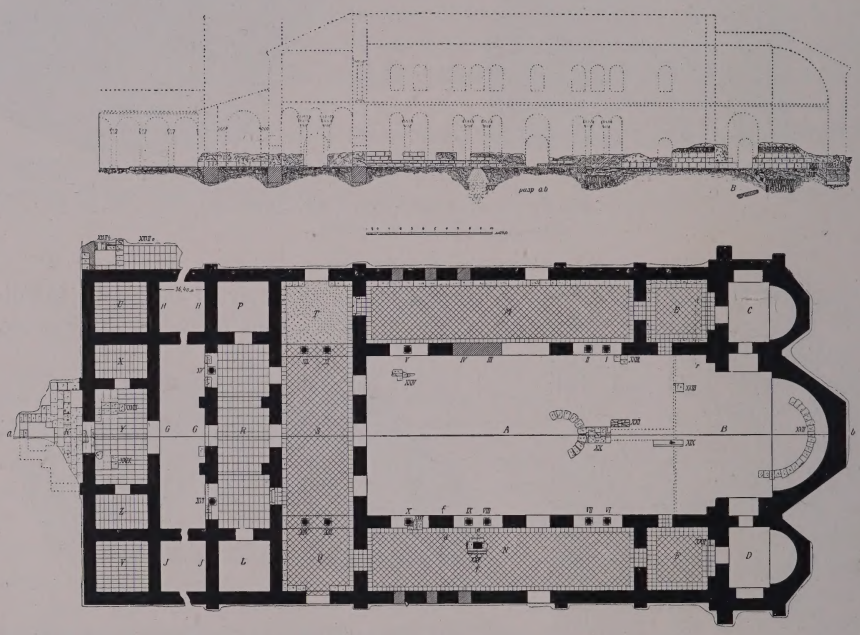

Fig. 5. — Plans of the large basilica in Aboba; 9th—10th cent.

From the architectural point of view the large basilica of Aboba is far more important, but only the foundation walls remain (Fig. 5). It is a church with three naves and three apses. The length, including the narthex, is forty nine meters, and the width is twenty nine meters. In addition to this, there was a spacious atrium on the west side, fifty meters in length, so that the total length of the whole construction was nearly one hundred meters. The atrium had open colonnades on the north and south sides only; the square spaces at the corners indicate towers. The side aisles of the real church are separated by heavy pillars, between which marble columns are placed

at regular intervals. This particularity is characteristic for the early Christian architecture of the East. The only gallery was apparently that over the narthex. All parts of the building were probably vaulted.

The basilica stands about one kilometer outside the inner walls of the town. The date of its erection cannot be ascertained with any certainty. Different reasons lead us however to consider it as belonging to the end of the ninth century or to the beginning of the tenth; it is therefore probably one of the oldest churches built in Bulgaria after Christianity had been officially adopted.

* * *

In 963, as a result of the disputes in the reigning house, the Kingdom of Bulgaria was divided into two independent states. The eastern state came first under Russian, and later, in 971, under Byzantine dominion. The western state, composed of Macedonia, Albania, the Morava district and the surroundings of Vidin and Sofia, was able under the Shishmanides to maintain its independence until 1018. Macedonia was the centre of Bulgarian political life during this period, which is almost entirely covered by the long and eventful reign of the Czar Samuel (977—1014), and here we also find the most important monuments of that time.

The warlike spirit of the age can be seen in the numerous fortresses, which were built to serve as a bulwark against the superior force of Byzantium. One of the best examples is the fortress of Ochrida whither the Czar Samuel transferred his residence for a time. The main entry, with its massive round towers is very well preserved until to-day (Fig. 6). The large church, dedicated to St. Achil, which stands on an island of the same name in the Lake of Prespa and which was built by the Czar Samuel to receive the reliques of the saint, has partially escaped destruction. It was a basilica with pillars, more than forty meters long, with three naves, three apses and side galleries. In arrangement it closely resembles the ancient basilica in Mesembria. Very impressive is the central apse, pierced by three high windows, but now partially buried. Of the wall paintings which once covered the inside of the church, only unimportant parts remain. An inscription, discovered and deciphered by Russian scholars, now almost obliterated, gives a list of the bishoprics which were subject to the Bulgarian Patriarchs. This inscription confirms the theory that the church actually was used as a Patriarchal church.

The large church of St. Sophia in Ochrida (Fig. 7 and 8) is of about the same date, as far as the earliest portions are concerned, for the west wing with the two side towers was only added in 1317. Czar Samuel transferred the seat of the Patriarch from Prespa to Ochrida, when he moved his own residence thither, and it is very probable that the church of St. Sophia was built as the Patriarchal church. It too, has three naves, and is a vaulted basilica, with pillars and three apses. In more than one way, it closely resembles the Achil-church in Prespa, except that it has no side galleries. At a later date, when it was transformed into a Turkish mosque, the arrange-

Fig. 6. — The main entry of the fortress in Ochrida; end of the 10th cent.

Fig. 7. — The church of St. Sophia in Ochrida, east front; beginning of the 11th cent.

ment of the interior was entirely changed. Remains of the original marble iconostasis have only recently been discovered. They consist of small square pillars, decorated with ornamental reliefs, which once separated the panels of the iconostasis (Fig. 9). There still remain other marble slabs sculptured in relief which also belonged to the original decoration of the church, but which were later on built into the floor by the

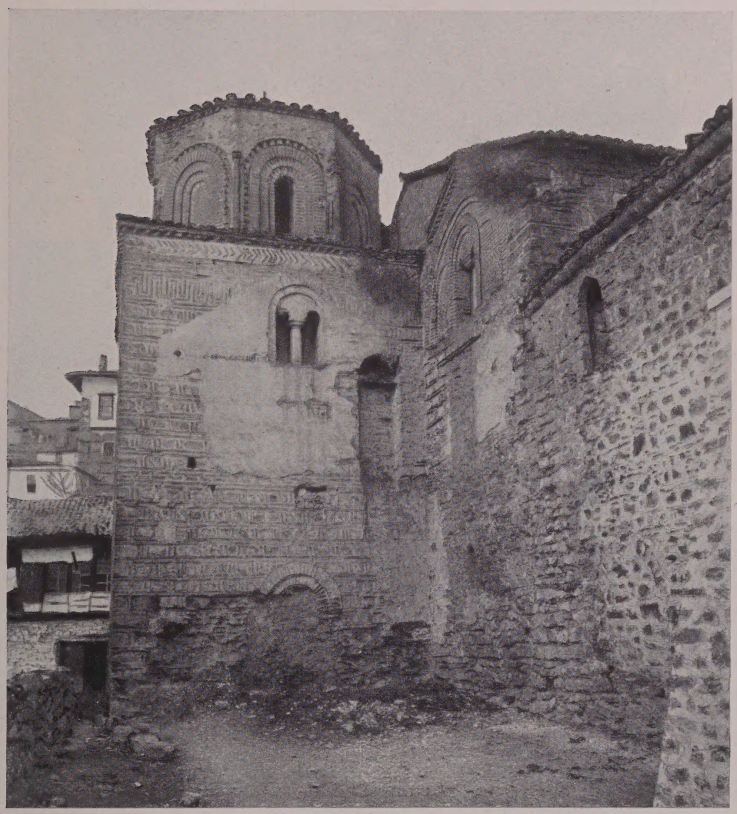

Fig. 8. — The church of St. Sophia in Ochrida, south-west corner; beginning of the 14th cent.

Turks (Fig. 10 and 13). The paintings which decorated the walls of the church were covered over with plaster, at the time of the Turks, and they have been only recently disclosed, during the present war. A thorough examination of these wall paintings will no doubt throw new light on the history of this church.

Very worthy of attention is the Turkish mimbar built of different ornamental pieces of the church (Plate III and Fig. 11 and 12). The top is formed by a sort of

marble baldachin, very richly decorated, which was probably originally used either as a ciborium or as a pulpit (ambon) in the church. The principal ornaments of the front of this marble baldachin which is supported on four small columns, are two symmetrically placed birds (peacocks) very conventional in style. The remaining surface is decorated with very fine interlaced ornaments. The execution of this decoration is unusual. The ornament is carved in low relief, and the hollow background is then fitted in with a kind of black enamel (Niello) so that a flat surface is again obtained.

Fig. 9. — Marble pillars of the iconostasis belonging to the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida; 11th cent.

In this way the white carved ornament stands out in strong contrast to the flat black surface. We might easily place this very oriental work, oriental in the style of the

Fig. 10. — Marble slab from the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida; 11th cent.

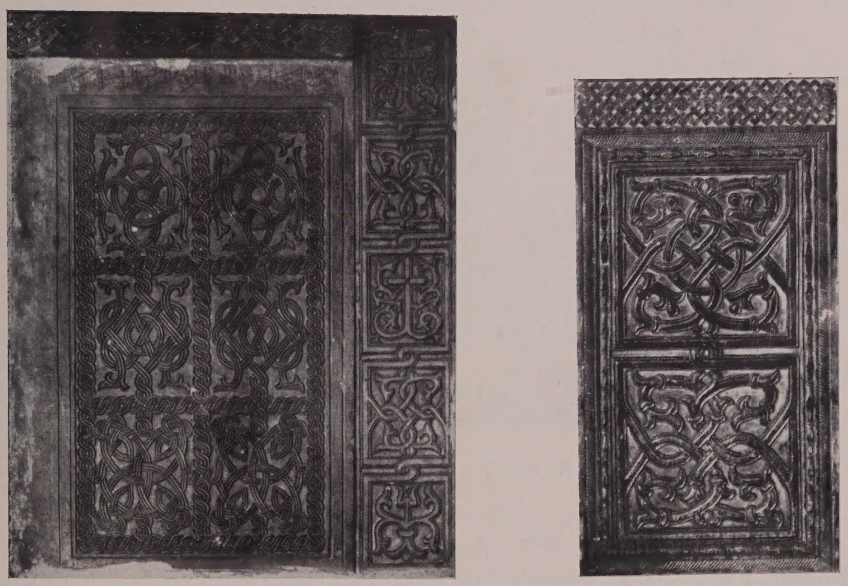

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Fig. 11. — Marble slabs from the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida; 14th cent.

ornament as well as in the technical process, in the eleventh or twelfth century, but the monograms it bears of the patriarch Gregorious — evidently the one who built the west wing — shows us that it only dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Fig. 12. — Marble pulpit in the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida; beginning of the 14th cent.

It is very important to notice that in the ruins of the early Bulgarian buildings at Aboba, Preslav and Patleina, similarly ornamented pieces of marble have been found. Evidently we have here a technical process with which the ancient Bulgarian artists were familiar and which is quite in harmony with the other oriental features of

the earliest bulgarian art. This detail is of the greatest importance if we are to pass judgement on the pulpit and the remaining decorative slabs of the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida, and is the best testimony to the fact that they are typically Bulgarian.

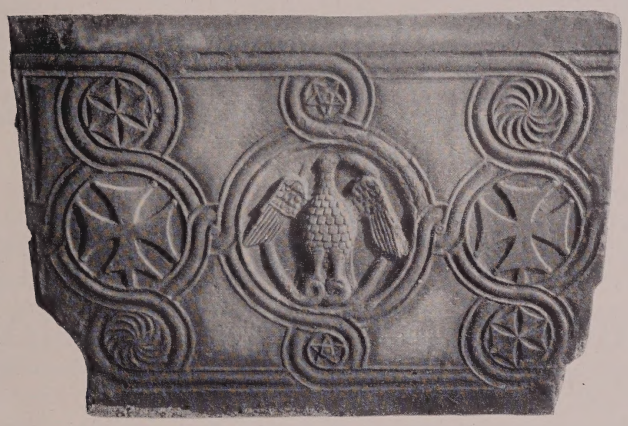

Fig. 13. — Marble slab from the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida; 11th cent.

Fig. 14. — Ancient Bulgarian castle in Vidin; 14th cent.

II. THE SECOND KINGDOM OF BULGARIA

Bulgaria remained under Byzantine rule until the year 1186. Only after long struggles could the Assenides, who were the leaders of the insurrection, succeed in re-establishing the Kingdom, so that it could maintain its independance. A succession of powerful and gifted rulers soon raised it to its former state of power and during the reign of Ivan Assen II (1218—1241) the Kingdom of Bulgaria was larger than at any other time. The capital was at this time the fortified Tirnovo, where the family of the Assenides had their original home.

Important changes now take place in the realm of art, the most noticeable of which is the striking break with the ancient tradition. The magnificence which is so characteristic of the large buildings built at the time of the first Bulgarian Kingdom, is lacking in the constructions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the other hand we find greater efforts to obtain more finished forms, and more careful workmanship; much attention is given to the details, and delicacy and refinement are more and more appreciated. Ornament therefore becomes specially perfected and is finally almost the chief point of interest. The large basilica-like constructions, resembling the early Christian buildings, such as we have seen in Aboba, Prespa and Ochrida, disappear, and we now generally find the cruciform domed church on a rectangular ground plan. The distinctive features of the exterior are two barrel vaults which intersect each other at right angles; the cupola is carried up generally on a high drum over the crossing. Many churches were built at that time but they were, for the most part, quite small. For instance no fewer than seventeen churches, dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth century, have been excavated in quite a small area

on the fortified hill of Trapesitza in Tirnovo. We find similar conditions in Mesembria, in Varosh near Prilep, and in Ochrida.

In the productions of this period we no longer find the same pronounced oriental characteristics, which we noticed in the monuments of the first Bulgarian Kingdom. We see that in the course of time Bulgarian art grew further and further away from those oriental traditions which the Bulgarians had brought with them from their original home. So much the more powerful therefore was the influence of Byzantium, until finally Bulgarian art became one with the art of Byzantium.

This process however must not be so understood as if Bulgarian art was simply lost in that of Byzantium, without retaining certain of its peculiarities and preserving its independence as a creative power. It is not the place here to discuss the nature, origin and development of Byzantine art or, more correctly, of the Byzantine style. We will only remark that this style did not spread out from one centre, but was rather the result of many different art movements which originated in all the countries situated around the eastern half of the Mediterranean sea. Bulgaria also took part in this art-movement; not only during the middle ages but, as we have already seen (page 1 and 2), already during the late Roman period, when the country became a very important meeting-point for Greek, Roman and Oriental art-currents.

For the same reason, it is incorrect to say, as it is sometimes said, that Byzantine art is Greek. On the contrary, it should be clearly recognised that Byzantine art was developed in decided opposition to the art of Greece, and that therefore it can in noway be called Greek. It did not originate in Greece, which in the late Roman period was already deserted and in a state of decay, but in the Orient, that region so rich with the treasures of early civilisation. Byzantine art is no more to be attributed to any one nation than are the Romanesque and Gothic art of the West. The words Byzantine, Romanesque or Gothic apply to the different styles and not to the works of art produced within the boundaries of any one nation. We can therefore quite justifiably speak of Bulgarian art as parallel to or forming part of Byzantine art just as we speak of German, French, or Italian art parallel to or forming a part of Romanesque or Gothic art.

After these general remarks we may pass on those monuments which date from the time of the second Bulgarian Kingdom. As the materials before us for this period are much more diversified we will consider the chief branches separately.

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1. ARCHITECTURE.

Many new buildings were erected at this time in Tirnovo, the new capital which remained for two centuries — until it was subjugated by the Turks in 1393 — the political and intellectual centre of Bulgaria. The main part of the town lies on two large hills, called Czarevetz and Trapesitza, with steep slopes on every side. They are separated by the winding river Iantra, which at this point forms an "S", so that it

makes the two hills into what we may call two small peninsulas. The real citadel with the most important state buildings is on the larger and strongly fortified hill of Czarevetz; the smaller hill of Trapesitza had, too, its own wall of defence. In the valley between the two hills, the lower town spread itself out on each side of the river Iantra. Considerable portions of the fortress walls still remain and suffice to give us some idea of the original construction.

It is much more difficult to gain any good idea of the appearance of the dwelling house of that day. Until within recent years three plain houses remained in the

Fig. 15. — Dwelling house in Arbanassi near Tirnovo; 17th cent.

lower town, which seemed to date from the fourteenth century. One of these was particularly interesting, and from the inscription carved above the door it was known as the house of "The Lady Boika". Unfortunately all three houses were completely destroyed by the severe earthquake of 1913. Not far away, in the little town of Arbanassi we find however some similar houses, which though built at a later period, have preserved the original type (Fig. 15). The ground floor, which we reach through a very large entrance door, has no windows, and usually serves as cellars. A second door leads us by a wooden staircase to the upper floor where we find the living rooms; they have but few very small round-headed windows.

We have much more varied material for the study of church architecture. In Tirnovo itself we should first mention the church of St. Demetrius, which according to contemporary notices was built by the first of the Assenides in 1186. Of the original

Fig. 16. — The church of St. Demetrius in Tirnovo, eastern part; 12th cent.

building only the eastern part with the apse remains (Fig. 16). More important was the church of the "Forty Martyrs", which was built by Ivan Assen II (1218—1241). Later alterations have so changed and disfigured the building, that it is impossible to form a correct idea of its original shape without previous excavations. The plan

was that of a basilica, with monolithic columns, partly taken from the ruins of Aboba, and besides these we find some Roman remains built into the structure. The marble capitals (Fig. 17) which show classical as well as Byzantine work, and which originally formed the top of the columns, now serve as bases for the wooden pillars of the open portico, which was added on the north side of the church when it was changed into a mosque.

Fig. 17. — Marble capital from the church of the Forty Martyrs in Tirnovo.

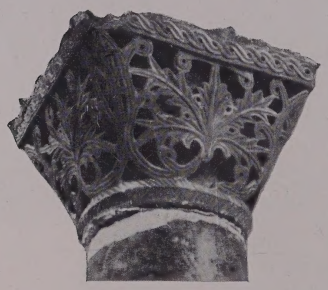

Fig. 18. — Marble capital from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo.

The church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo, with its impressive interior (Plate V) was, until recently, one of the best preserved ancient buildings in Bulgaria. Unfortunately this church too, was almost entirely destroyed by the earthquake of 1913. It dates from the fourteenth century and with its cupola resting on four columns it offers a typical example of a cruciform domed church of that period. Particularly interesting, on account of the excellent workmanship, are some of the capitals, belonging to an earlier building, decorated with sharply cut acanthus leaves (Fig. 18). We shall mention the frescoes, which decorated the whole of the interior of the church, later on in another connection.

As we see from the three above mentioned churches in Tirnovo, the architects of that time did not try to give a powerful impression of space, but they aimed rather at producing the richest decorative effect possible, outside as well as inside. They also bestowed extreme care upon the details. For the decoration of the interior painting, mosaics and wood carving were principally used; for the exterior, the building material was first suitably employed. Besides the regularly cut blocks of stone, red bricks were also used, regularly alternated with the blocks of stone. In this way a decorative effect was obtained not only by the difference of colour, but also by the wealth of patterns available. In order to obtain a greater diversity of colour, different kinds of stone were sometimes used, and the bricks were laid in a mosaic-like manner between the stones. Tirnovo it is true, offers no very good example of this style of construction, but we find it employed in a remarkably artistic way in the churches at Mesembria. Indeed the church of St. John at the harbour of Mesembria is a splendid example of this kind of work (Fig. 19 and 20). It shows us a greater wealth of ornamental patterns than we find in any other building in Bulgaria.

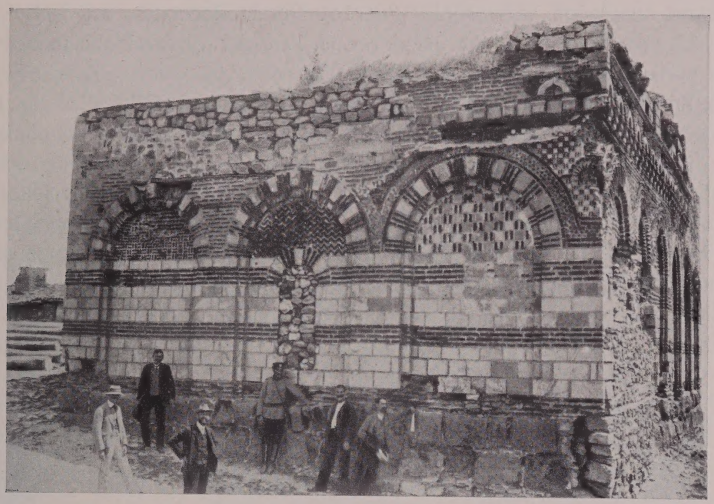

Fig. 19. — The church of St. John at the harbour in Mesembria, west front; 14th cent.
Before the destruction by the earthquake of 1913.

On the other hand the churches of Tirnovo show us another peculiarity, which is the use of short cylindrical tiles having on one side a small wheel or rosette glazed in green or yellow. These were also used to decorate the exterior walls, and they were usually so built into the round arches, above the windows or niches, that only the

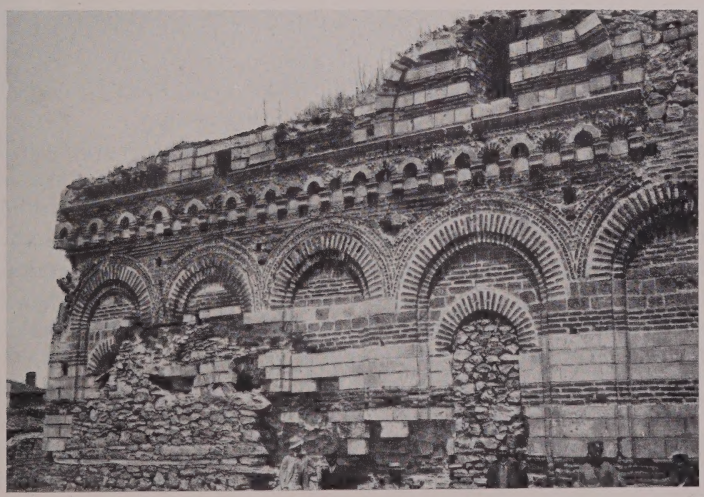

Fig. 20. — The church of St. John at the harbour in Mesembria, south front; 14th cent.
Before the destruction by the earthquake of 1913.

small glazed decoration was visible (Fig. 16). Purely decorative too is the series of shallow niches, carried along the exterior wall, in order to break the monotony of a large flat surface (Fig. 16, 19, 20 and Plate IV).

We find the same typical features in other church buildings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Bulgaria. Since it is impossible to give a full description of them here, we must restrict ourselves to calling attention to some of the most important examples. We place first the church of a fortress, built by Ivan Assen II on the top of a high hill, near Stanimaka to the south of Philippopel, which is named after its founder (Plate IV and Fig. 21). It represents the mausoleum type of church, such as we also find in other parts of Bulgaria (Boiana, Batshkovo), and is not intended for public worship, but rather to serve as a burial vault for the members of well-known families. The church has two stories. The lower story is used as a burial vault,

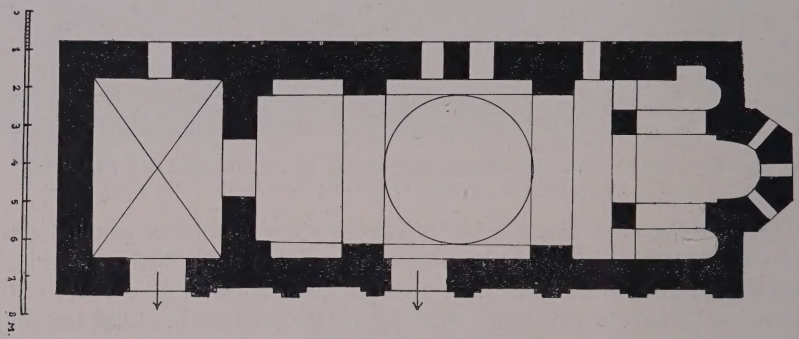

Fig. 21. — Plan of the church of Ivan Assen II near Stanimaka; 13th cent.

therefore it has no windows and is reached directly from the outside by a door in the west wall. The real church is above this and is not directly connected with the burial vault. An outside staircase placed on the south side, leads up into the church. It is clear that churches of this kind can only be very small.

If we look for similar church buildings in western Bulgaria we must first of all mention Ochrida. What Tirnovo is to eastern Bulgaria, Ochrida is to western Bulgaria, to Macedonia. We have seen that the Czar Samuel transferred his residence and the seat of the Patriarchate thither; but these purely external events had no particular effect on the further development of the town. There were other reasons why it was so important for the intellectual life of Bulgaria. Ochrida and the surrounding country had become — at the time of the spread of Christianity in Bulgaria — the centre of activity for two very notable men, Clement, who died in 916, and his contemporary Naum, both canonized by the Bulgarian church. They were the direct disciples of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, and after the death of the latter in 885, they came to Bulgaria to the court of the Czar Boris, who sent them to Macedonia where they were to establish in the new faith the Bulgarians of that district. The great respect which Clement and Naum won by their ceaseless and fruitful activity for the religious and moral elevation of the people, and the services they

rendered for the advancement and spread of Bulgarian literature, produced such lasting effects that Ochrida became a holy town for Bulgarians. At the end of the tenth century this town increased in importance when the Patriarchate of Ochrida was founded. This Patriarchate remained even after the conquest of Bulgaria by the Turks, and was only suppressed in 1767. We see how in this way Ochrida became the centre of Bulgarian intellectual and spiritual life in Macedonia, and it is therefore perfectly natural that we should find some of the most important monuments of early Bulgarian art in this town.

Fig. 22. — The church of St. John in Ochrida; 14th cent.

We have already mentioned (page 9—11) the old church of St. Sophia in Ochrida. The most important of the other churches, which belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is the church of St. Clement, built in 1295 (Plate VI and VII). It was originally dedicated to the Virgin, and has but recently been re-named. Although somewhat changed by later additions the original plan can easily be seen. It is another cruciform church with a cupola, distinguished from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo by the fact that the cupola does not rest on columns, but on heavy piers. The effect of the interior is therefore much simpler. We see here the same decorative manner of employing the building materials as we saw in the churches of eastern Bulgaria, though it is much less extensively employed.

Another similar building is the church of St. John, which attracts our attention by its picturesque position on a high rock at the lake-side (Fig. 22). Constructionally more important are two very small churches — the church of Constantine and Helena,

and the older church of the Virgin — which instead of a cupola, have a raised barrel vault crossing the building (Fig. 23). The church in the monastery of St. Naum with the tomb of the saint on the south-eastern shore of the Lake of Ochrida is also worthy of notice (Fig. 24). The narthex of the church with its low flat cupola and two small columns with trapezoid capitals, shows a variation from the usual plan (Fig. 25). In other parts of Macedonia, as for instance near Shtip, in the suburb Varosh near Prilep, or in the neighbourhood of Skopie we find some churches of this period which are in parts in a good state of preservation. If these churches

Fig. 23. — The church of Constantine and Helena in Ochrida; 13th—14th cent.

were more closely examined, our knowledge of the church architecture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Bulgaria would be considerably enriched.

If we remember what an important place religion occupied in the public life of ancient times, we shall not be astonished that so many monuments of church architecture remain for us to study. In comparison we have but few examples, typical of domestic and civil architecture. But in this respect too, we may expect important discoveries from a more detailed examination of the monuments we possess. We still have an ancient Bulgarian castle of the fourteenth century, which is to be found in the town of Vidin on the Danube (Fig. 14). It has recently been partially restored, but its original appearance has not been changed.

Fig. 24. — The church in the monastery of St. Naum near Ochrida; 14th cent.

Fig. 25. — The narthex of the church in the monastery of St. Naum; 14th cent.

2. PAINTING.

The erection of so many churches in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries gave a great impulse to the development of wall-paintings. The custom of painting the whole of the interior of the church offered sufficient scope for displaying this art. On the other hand it also led to its becoming almost purely mechanical. But among the mediocre productions of the majority of painters, we still find pictures which show very great artistic talent.

These wall-paintings are generally known as frescoes. The technical process is however not really that of a fresco, but is tempera work, for which white of egg was used to mix the colours. The walls were first covered with a thin coating of fine white plaster, by which means a suitable surface was obtained. Not only the walls, but also cupola, pillars, vaultings, window and door frames all were painted, so that no single spot remained without pictorial decoration. If the pictures were, in the course of time, damaged, and this must frequently have happened because of the method of painting employed, they were simply thinly coated over again and repainted. In the old churches, therefore, we generally find several layers of wall-paintings one over the other, and we not unfrequently find that the earliest are in the best state of preservation.

Of these old wall-paintings those in the church of Boiana are among the most beautiful and the most important. The small village of Boiana is situated on the northern slopes of the Vitosha mountain, only eight kilometers south-west of Sofia. Here in the eleventh century a very small church, with a cupola, was built and decorated with wall-paintings. We learn from the inscription which still exists, and from the state of the building that this little church was enlarged in 1259, by a Bulgarian nobleman Sevastokrator Kaloian. We may conjecture that this nobleman had his ancestral castle in Boiana itself, for the ruins of an old castle are still to be seen on the top of a high cliff, at the foot of which the Boiana river rushes wildly along. In order to enlarge the little church a new two-storied mausoleum type of building, similar to the above mentioned (v. p. 22) edifice built by Ivan Assen II, was added on to the west wall of the original building; in this way the ancient church, dating from the eleventh century, now forming the eastern portion of the block (Fig. 26), could only be reached from the lower windowless story of the new church, which was intended to serve as a burial vault. When Kaloian added the new building he also had repainted the old church, so that in all parts of the building, the greater part of the wall-paintings which remain date from the year 1259. Underneath these, we still find in the eastern part remains of the eleventh century frescoes. Further, certain surfaces of the walls in both buildings have been painted over at a later period, probably as late as the seventeenth century. When these later additions were removed, the old paintings lying underneath were brought to light in an excellent state of preservation.

The pictures of 1259 are of the greatest interest. We can here only mention the most important of them. In the lower story of Kaloian's building on the northern

wall we can see the life size pictures of Kaloian and his wife Dessislava (Plate L). The former, as founder of the church, is represented with a model of it in his hands. The magnificent robe of Dessislava is worthy of notice. It is decorated with a design of two lions grouped in a heraldic position, which is repeated three times, and which is evidently intended to be embroidered on the robe. On the opposite southern wall we see the Bulgarian Czar Constantine Assen (1258—1277) and his wife Irene, a daughter of the Emperor Theodor Laskaris and grand-daughter of the Czar Ivan Assen II (Plate LI). They are represented wearing their rich state robes, with crowns and sceptres. All these

Fig. 26. — The church in Boiana near Sofia; 11th und 13th cent.

pictures, though painted in the stiff ceremonious manner of the time, clearly show a definite attempt to present individual peculiarities and may therefore be considered as portraits.

In a niche on the same wall we see a larger painting representing Christ as a boy in the Temple conversing with the scribes (Plate XII). This picture, which has only recently been discovered underneath later paintings which have been removed, is remarkable for the life-like execution and the exceedingly fine drawing. Very interesting is the head of Christ with its beautiful regular features, and the group of Jews on the right side of the picture with their characteristic faces all eager with curiosity.

In the eastern part of the church the pictures are divided into three rows placed one above the other. On the north wall we see first the Last Supper; underneath next

to each other the Crucifixion and the Resurrection (Plate XIII). The lowest row contains four large full-length pictures of saints. The picture of the Crucifixion is most beautiful and remarkable for the intense feeling which the artist has expressed. Spontaneity of inspiration and great certainty in the drawing give this picture quite a particular artistic value.

The lower row of pictures on the opposite south wall of the eastern part of the church also contains four large separate pictures. On the left, we see Constantine

Fig. 27. — Pictures of saints.
Wall-painting of 1259 in the church of Boiana.

and Helena with the cross, and on the right, two warrior saints (Fig. 27). Very excellent and full of character is the head of the last saint on the right, which is justly considered to be among the best work in the church. The picture of Christ enthroned seen on the east wall, which was only recently discoved underneath the later plaster, also dates from 1259, and is worth noticing on account of the gentleness of the expression and the delicacy of the drawing (Fig. 28).

As an example of the church mural painting of the fourteenth century, we may take the pictures still existing in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo. Unfortunately the severe earthquake of 1913, which almost destroyed the church, destroyed the greater part of the mural paintings, too. The upper part of the church, where

the larger frescoes were, was particularly badly damaged, so that only small fragments remain of the beautiful "Burial of Christ" and the "Washing of the Apostles' feet", which are some of the most remarkable pieces of work in the church. These fragments, however, enable us to form an idea of the high artistic excellence of these paintings. We have also but unimportant remains of other pictures which represented the life of Christ. The full-length pictures of saints, which we see in the lower part of the church, are better preserved. For instance, on one of the large pillars, we find the two expressive figures of St. Peter and St. Paul, carrying in their hands the symbol of the church of Christ (Plate XV). On the south wall of the church, Christ is represented sitting on a large throne as King of Kings, between the pictures of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist (Plate LII).

In the vestibule of the church, we see all the oecumenical synods represented one after the other with a wearisome uniformity. We give as an example of this kind of wall-painting, which is somewhat unusual, the painting representing the fourth oecumenical synod held in 451 at Chalkedon (Plate LIII). On the right we see the Emperor Markianos surrounded by his guards, sitting on the throne and presiding over the assembly.

Fig. 28. — Christ enthroned.
Wall-painting of 1259 in the church of Boiana.

It is interesting to notice in what a drastic manner the painter has represented the dogmatic disputes of these worthy gentlemen otherwise so quiet and dignified, for we see an archbishop seizing his companion by the beard!

We do not know the names of the artists who painted the pictures in Boiana and Tirnovo. Their works are anonymous as are all the other mural paintings of the same period in Bulgaria. It was not then the custom as at a later date to sign the works of art. That these artists were Bulgarians can be seen from the accompanying explanatory inscriptions which are all in the Bulgarian language.

In different places in Macedonia also there are still to be found church wall-paintings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. We first call attention to those pictures in the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida, which have been discovered quite recently — during the war — under the Turkish plaster. These paintings are unfortunately much damaged, but they belong to some of the best work of their kind and are of great artistic value. Until they have been carefully cleaned by experts — and this could not be done when they were discovered — it is not possible to reproduce them properly. We ought to mention further the thirteenth century wall-paintings in the small church of St. Clement in Ochrida. The little known wall-paintings which have never been sufficiently examined, in the church of St. Nicholas in Varosh, near Prilep, and those in the monastery church of St. Andrew, near Skopie, were painted in 1299.

Considering the material we possess, we are fully justified in speaking even for this period of distinct Bulgarian schools of painting. How far their influence extended, how far they were connected with the other schools of the same period, and where this art originated, — these are questions which can only be answered after further researches. We are not even in a position to present a systematic classification of the extremely rich material in our possession. What we have mentioned above is simply intended to call attention to these rich sources, so important for the study of the history of ancient art, and, if possible, to stimulate scholars to further investigations. It would lead us too far if we attempted to give a list of the existing wall-paintings. They are to be found everywhere in Bulgaria and in Macedonia, and it is to be hoped that Bulgarian scholars very soon, that is, as soon as circumstances allow, will pay the necessary attention to these monuments which furnish such important evidence of earlier Bulgarian culture.

In order to judge these frescoes rightly, two things are very necessary. First we must remember that they were intended as decorative compositions and so required the picture to be treated as a plane surface; and secondly we must not forget that the fine arts which come within Byzantine sphere of influence, have their own laws of beauty. It would therefore be a great mistake to apply to these works of art the same standard that we apply, for instance, to classical art. Byzantine artists never considered form as an end in itself, nor did they regard perfection of form as the highest aim of their art. For them, the important thing is their subject. With their picture they wish to tell a story, and they try to express it in the clearest language possible.

Thus the form often becomes a mere formula, and we get that conventional stiffness which so persistently clings to their work.

Byzantine art has often rightly been compared to Egyptian art. In both styles we find the same pronounced conservative tendencies which produced a certain lifeless formalism and forced the artist continually to reproduce certain primitive forms. This is the reason why the more modern works of Byzantine art often look very archaic. But it does not prove however that Byzantine art was incapable of development. If we have once learned to read its language, we can easily see that it really does change and bears the stamp of the different centuries. The same remark applies to Bulgarian art.

It is very instructive to notice how the same subject was treated at different periods. Let us take for example one of the most frequently reproduced scenes in church paintings, the Death of the Virgin (Koimesis). In Boiana in 1259 the subject is treated in a very restrained and dignified manner (Plate XIV). Christ is seen only in the distance with the soul of the dead Virgin in his hands, and takes no direct part in what is going on around the bier. The expression and the gestures of the apostles clearly show their deep grief. There are no stormy movements, and there is no exaggeration in the drawing. A solemn repose fills the whole picture, in which the artist has restricted himself to drawing the essentials without giving any secondary episodes.

A strong contrast is formed by the wall-painting of the fourteenth century in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo (Plate LIV and Fig. 29). In this picture the figures are passionately agitated. Christ is seen bending low over the head of his Mother, holding her soul in one hand and with the other closing her eyes. To the right and to the left, two archangels have been added, and round the bier there stand several candlesticks, while in the corners we see the blessed in heaven. The drawing is here less careful and more conventional, the faces lack those delicate destinctive features which we saw in the heads of the apostles in Boiana.

Finally in a picture of the year 1616, which is in the church of St. George in Tirnovo, we find the same subject treated in a completely stiff and lifeless manner (Plate XVI 2). The artist has imagined a clever arrangement, adapted from the early models, but he lacks any spontaneous feeling or vivacity of sentiment. The only improvement he has made is that he has enriched the composition by adding new figures whereas the picture as a whole loses greatly in artistic value. This last picture, however, really belongs to the next period with which we shall concern ourselves later.

* * *

The development of church pictures on panels or the so-called icons is very closely connected with this development of wall-paintings. Icons are wood panels, larger or smaller, on which generally only one saint is painted; larger compositions are less frequently seen. The picture is not painted on the wood itself, but the latter is either covered with a thin coat of plaster, or has canvas stretched over it. Many such icons, dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, are still to be seen. Since

Fig. 29. — The Death of the Virgin.

Wall-painting in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo; 14th cent. (from a photograph taken after the destruction of the church by the earthquake of 1913).

they are, however, interesting chiefly because of the metal decoration which adorns them, we shall mention them in the next chapter together with other metal works.

Miniature painting also attained great perfection in Bulgaria at this time. The two most important illuminated manuscripts, written on vellum in the old Bulgarian language, are no longer in Bulgaria. One is the Bulgarian translation of the well-known Chronicle of Manasses, now in the Vatican library, which was written between 1356 and 1362 for the Bulgarian Czar Ivan Alexander. The second manuscript is a copy of the Gospels written in 1356 for the same Czar by an otherwise unknown monk, Simeon. It formerly belonged to Lord Robert Curzon, who found it in the monastery of St. Paul on the mountain of Athos in 1837, and carried it to London where it is at present preserved in the British Museum.

Unfortunately only very few of the numerous miniatures — there are over 400 — which adorn these two manuscripts have been reproduced, and that only very indifferently. A coloured copy of the picture of the Czar Ivan Alexander and his family which is taken from the Curzon manuscript will serve as an example of these miniatures (Plate LVII). It is therefore impossible to give a more detailed account of these valuable manuscript illuminations which are of the greatest importance for the history of ancient Bulgarian painting. What lends them their peculiar value is the fact that they not only depict ecclesiastical, but also profane scenes. From these drawings alone, can we learn to know something more of the secular art of this period in Bulgaria, about which we now know so very little.

In this respect the Vatican manuscript is of the greatest importance. It not only contains the Bulgarian translation of the Chronicles of Manasses, but also many additions referring to Bulgarian history not found in the Greek original text. These additions which are written in red ink, are easily distinguishable; they are also enriched with numerous miniatures illustrating different episodes in the history of Bulgaria, as, for instance, the execution of the Emperor Nikiphorous, beheaded by the Bulgarian King Krum in 811, the baptism of the Bulgarians, or the death of Prince Ivan Assen, son of the Czar Ivan Alexander. If, for the greater number of his paintings, the artist copied the models he found in the Greek original, he was, on the other hand, obliged to depend on his own skill for the illumination of his additions or to follow other Bulgarian models. In any case these miniature-paintings are the most important examples of historical painting in Bulgaria during the fourteenth century.

3. APPLIED ART.

The decorative art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was chiefly employed for ornamenting the churches. At least the greater number of such objects of art which have been preserved are connected with the church. Although it may be supposed that the artists also satisfied the needs of the ordinary public, it is nevertheless clear that the best productions were destined for the use of the church as was customary at that time.

Let us then first consider wood-carving which was, as we have seen, so important for the decoration of the old Bulgarian palaces and which was now destined to enrich the interior of the churches. Besides being used on doors and many other different objects in the church, wood-carving could be extensively employed to decorate the large altar-screen, the so-called iconostasis which in the orthodox churches shuts off the altar. The early Bulgarian wood-carvers found here excellent opportunities to develop a greath wealth of design, and have revealed great skill in composition, so that in no other branch of the applied arts can we so easily follow the growth and development of early Bulgarian ornament.

Unfortunately we possess no complete iconostasis of the earliest period. We only have a few fragments of screens and some other carved objects. Among the most remarkable of these is a wooden door, now in the church ot St. Nicholas which dates from the fourteenth century. The door (Plate XXXIV) is still older, and is usually considered to belong to the twelfth or thirteenth century. It is made up of a large number of carved panels nailed on a foundation. The different subjects are taken from the old Oriental-Byzantine types. In the lowest row we see also a centaur which recalls certain classical models. It has been remarked that the ornamentation on this door very closely resembles that on the celebrated wooden chest of Terracina. This leads us to imagine that these carved panels may have belonged to a similar chest and that they were afterwards used to decorate the door.

Somewhat later in date are the two doors of an altar-screen which were until recently to be seen in an old church in Varosh near Prilep. Of one door only the left wing now remains, in the middle of which there is carved an archangel, forming part of the scene of the Annunciation, which was continued on the other wing. The second door has an inscription in old Bulgarian carved along the top, half of which has disappeared with the upper half of the right wing. The square panels underneath were once painted, but these paintings have disappeared. The ornament is principally interlaced tracery with rosettes. But we also find figures of animals. The eagle with a hare in its claws was very much used at this time and we find this motive, which is seen in the earliest Byzantine models, also used on the above mentioned wooden door in Ochrida.

The well-known old door in the monastery of St. John of Rila is a masterpiece of Bulgarian wood-carving (Plate XXXV). The exceedingly fine open work is made by a delicate pattern of ribbon-like ornament and rosettes of interlaced tracery. In the centre of the door, the twelve upright panels — where the two wings meet — are decorated with highly conventional and sometimes fantastic figures of animals. The high half-ball shaped rosettes are a brilliant testimony to the technical skill of the artist, and it is worth noticing that all the remaining rosettes show different designs of interlaced tracery.

Belonging to the same period and probably the work of the same artist is the so-called throne of Chrel, also in the monastery of Rila (Fig. 30). The ornamentation in the upper part of the back is in the same delicate style as that on the door, although the design is different.

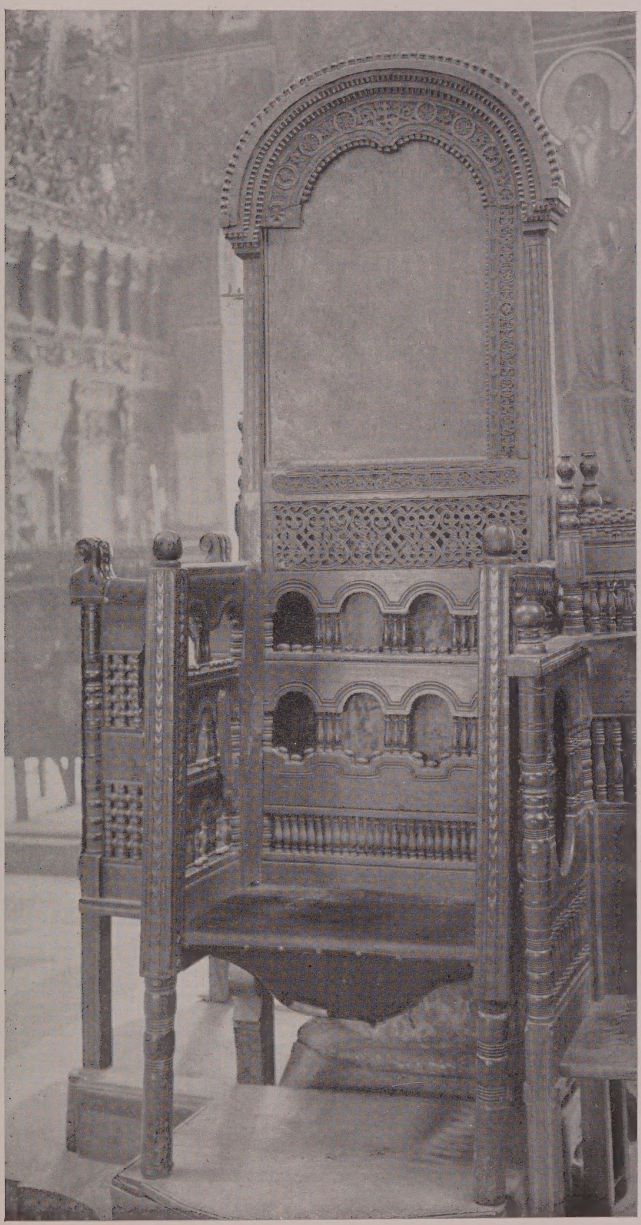

Fig. 30. — Carved wooden throne ("the throne of Chrel") in the monastery of Rila; 14th cent.

Fig. 31. — The Annunciation, left part.
Icon in the church of St. Clement in Ochrida; 11th—12th cent.

Fig. 32. — The Annunciation, right part.
Icon in the church of St. Clement in Ochrida; 11th—12th cent.

Fig. 33. — The Virgin.
Icon of 1310 in the monastery of Batshkovo.

Works of art such as the door and the throne in the Rila monastery show Bulgarian wood-carving at a very highly developed point. The ornamentation, however, seen in these two examples does not seem as if it had grown out of wood carving. The decoration on the door looks more like metal-work; the connection will be clearer when we consider the metal work of the same period.

The most important specimens of this early metal work are the silver cases of many icons which are to be seen in the church of St. Clement in Ochrida. There are ten icons, and the greater number of these are fourteenth century work, others, however, date from the eleventh or twelfth century. The pictures seem to have been retouched at a later period. The silver case is so arranged that it leaves only the portrait uncovered and entirely covers the remaining part of the picture as well as the frame.

There belong to the oldest pieces of this group two icons on which the Annunciation, divided into two parts, was painted (Fig. 31 and 32). We can see from what remains, that the crown round the head of the archangel was originally enamelled. The ornamentation is principally floral motives, connected by running foliage, while embossed figures adorn the edge.

Quite another kind of ornament is to be seen on some icons dating from the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Plate XX and XXI). The different designs are here much more stiffly conventional and give an effect of real arabesques. Particularly worthy of note are the high half-ball shaped tracery rosettes, similiar to those on the wooden door in the Rila monastery (Plate XXXV).

It would be interesting to find out where and by whom these icons were made. Since, however, it is not possible to discover this at present, we may point out a few facts which are not without importance with regard to these questions. There is no reason to doubt that these icons are the work of native artists, as no similar work is known in other countries. It is more difficult to decide whether the artists were Bulgarian or Greek. If the place where they were discovered supports the first supposition, the Greek inscriptions carved on the icons might support the second. The Greek inscriptions are, however, not conclusive, for Bulgarian artists, as we shall see later, also used Greek which was, for a time, the language of all educated persons in Bulgaria just as Latin was in the West of Europe. The fact that on some icons the decoration, and indeed the whole of the workmanship, is decidedly oriental in character, appears of greater importance, for this, as we have seen above, is characteristic of old Bulgarian works of art. Further we also find similar work in other parts of Bulgaria. Besides the celebrated icon of the Virgin dating from 1310, with the Georgic inscription, which is seen in the monastery of Batshkovo (Fig. 33), we ought to mention here an icon, for which an uncle of the Czar Ivan Alexander gave the silver case to Mesembria in 1342 (Plate XXII). The picture itself has been repainted, or at least very much retouched, at some later period. The silver case is also incomplete; it is almost entirely lacking on the frame, where it was badly mended at some later date with less carefully decorated bands of silver. What remains is however quite sufficient to show how closely related it is to the work in Ochrida. Moreover the typical hemi-

spherical rosettes were not lacking, as we can see from a mark on the right side of the frame where the rosette has now fallen off.

The gold and silver ornaments of the period such as earrings and bracelets also show the interlaced motive and ball-shaped double rosette as principal decoration. Some of the objects found close to the village of Draghijevo, near Tirnovo, are worth

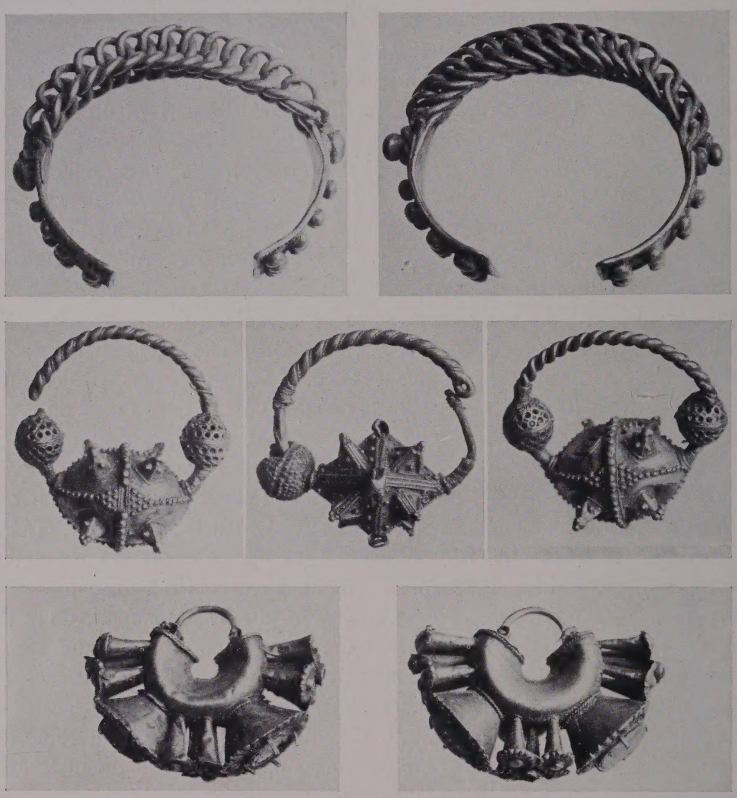

Fig. 34. — Bracelets and earrings from Draghijevo near Tirnovo; 14th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

noticing because they can be placed with more accuracy, according to the dates of the coins found with then, in the first half of the fourteenth century (Fig. 34). The openwork bracelets made of strong plaited silver wire are typical of the period and are frequently seen in Bulgaria. The heavy gilt ear-ornaments, such as were found at Draghijevo, did not hang in the ear, but were worn on strings. One pair, decorated with coloured stones, are very curiously shaped (Fig. 34 below).

Fig. 35. — Enamelled gold dyptich; 11th—12th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

The decorative effect of metal work was often enhanced by enamels as we have seen in the icons of Ochrida. In a bronze medal from Tirnovo, decorated with two very conventionalised lions, we have a background of red enamel (Fig. 36). Very much more finely executed is a gold dyptich which probably dates from the eleventh or twelfth century (Fig. 35). It is in the so called cloisonné enamel work in blue, green, white and red.

The few objects mentioned here will suffice to give some idea of the goldsmith's work in Bulgaria during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. We have but very little material at present in this branch. The workmanship, however, already shows those peculiarities and main points of style which were characteristic of this art in the following centuries, when the goldsmith's art was at its best and very generally appreciated by all classes of the people.

Fig. 36. — Enamelled bronze medal from Tirnovo;
12th—13th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

Fig. 37. — Carved wooden frieze from Arbanassi near Tirnovo; 17th cent.

III. THE TURKISH PERIOD

THE conquest of Tirnovo by the Turks, in 1393, was the end of the political and ecclesiastical independance of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Patriarchate was immediately suppressed and the church of the country was placed under the Patriarch of Constantinople. The period of Turkish rule began and rudely arrested the development of the Bulgarian people, repressing their intellectual and artistic energies and threatening, for a time, their very existence as a nation. The best and most respected men who stood at the head of the people were either cruelly exterminated or banished in great numbers. In this way, the Turks thought to intimidate the inhabitants and to force them to submit. It is clear that under such conditions native art found no favourable soil for its further development, and its productivity was, of necessity, very greatly limited.

1. ARCHITECTURE.

These changed conditions were most felt in the domain of architecture. The national style could develop no further, because there was now no question of the Bulgarians erecting for themselves any larger monuments or public buildings. They retained a certain independance only in church building, though here, too, they were greatly restricted. The largest and most beautiful churches were converted into mosques by the Turks. From this moment the conquered people were allowed to build only very modest churches; the exterior had to be as little noticeable as possible, so that the anger and jealousy of the Mohammedans might not be aroused. We therefore find, at this period, those small churches, externally very little different from the ordinary dwelling houses, which were hurriedly constructed with the simplest building materials, and often half hidden in the ground. As these constructions were not solidly built, they were very often improved and altered, so that very few were ever left to attain any great age. Only in the distant mountain-regions, where it was possible to avoid

the eye of the Turks, could they build with greater freedom, so that, in the fifteenth century, a number of new monasteries and a few churches were built in remote spots, as for instance in Boboshevo (Kustendil district), near the village of Dragalevtzi on the northern slopes of the Vitosha mountains and in the Erma valley, so difficult of access, where we find the Poganovo monastery. These buildings still retain the characteristics of the older cruciform church with a cupola, though they are externally much simpler. They no longer have the shallow niches along the exterior walls and what

Fig. 38. — The church in the monastery of Poganovo; 15th cent.

is even more noticeable, they no longer show the decorative effect produced by combining the use of different coloured stones and bricks, which was so typical of the older churches. We may form some idea of this modest building activity from the monastery of Poganovo (Fig. 38). Built at the end of the fifteenth century, it recalls, with its square campanile, the church of Ivan Assen II, near Stanimaka (Plate IV).

In the course of time the cupola gradually disappeared, and the church finally became a long plain hall, without columns, with a barrel-vault. As examples of this style, we may mention the church in Baniani near Skopie, built in 1549, that in Nedobarsko near Mehomia of 1614, the church of St. George in Tirnovo, built in 1616

(now destroyed), and the church of St. Nicholas in Marsen, between Prilep and Veles, built in 1694.

We gain the best impression of the ecclesiastical architecture of this date from the little town of Arbanassi near Tirnovo, where many churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries still remain. These churches are generally divided into two parts, connected by a door. In the eastern part we find the altar and the iconostasis, while the western part is reserved for the women and replaces the galleries. On the west

Fig. 39. — The principal church in the monastery of Batshkovo, built in 1604.

side there is a narthex, which is continued along the north side of the church, and ends on the east side in a small chapel (Paraklis). In the church of Christ in Arbanassi we can clearly see that this narthex was originally an open hall with columns, and that the intervals between the columns were walled up at a later period. The roofs over all parts of the building are as a rule barrel-vaulted, sometime strengthened with very prominent ribs (Fig. 49). We shall speak of the frescoes which decorate the walls and the ceilings in a later chapter.

Larger buildings of this period are, for the above mentioned reasons, naturally very rare; so much the more worthy of notice is the principal church in the monastery of Batshkovo, built in 1604, in the remote mountainous region south of Philippopel.

It is again a large cruciform church with a cupola, in the older style, with semi-circular side choirs which are characteristic of monastery churches. On the west side is a small church which seems to date from the fifteenth century.

There was no increased building activity until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when, by the peace of Adrinople (1829), religious freedom was officially granted to all Christians in the Kingdom of Turkey. Where circumstances allowed, and where the necessary means were forthcoming, the old plain churches were then replaced by splendid spacious buildings. In this way, many larger churches were erected at this date. They are still generally vaulted basilicas, with or without cupolas, as, for

Fig. 40. — The church of the Virgin in Tatar-Pazardjik, built in 1832.

example, the church of the Virgin in Tatar-Pazardjik, built in 1832 (Fig. 40). As the cupola was, in most cases, no structural part of the building, but was only kept for the sake of tradition, it did not influence the interior of the building since it needed no special constructional support. In such cases it no longer served as a roof, but was purely decorative, and was therefore very light, so that there was no thrust on the walls. The interior was usually divided into three parts by two rows of columns (Plate VIII). Very worthy of notice are the richly decorated basket capitals which are exceedingly varied (Plate VIII and Fig. 41). These capitals only very distantly resemble the Corinthian capital, and the designs which ornament them can be traced in the wood-carvings of the same period.

The most important monument of the beginning of the nineteenth century is the monastery of St. John of Rila. The great fire of January 13th, 1833, almost destroyed the old buildings which dated from the middle of the fourteenth century. The Turkish

authorities allowed the monastery to be rebuilt on condition that the original plan was adhered to, and that the different buildings were all rebuilt as they were before. For this reason, although we may suppose that the conditions were not fulfilled to the letter, since we know that the principal church was considerably widened, the present buildings of the monastery of Rila will enable us to form a good idea of the early monastic buildings in Bulgaria.

The work of reconstruction which lasted from 1834—1837 was directed by the Bulgarian master-workman Paul from the village of Krimin, near Kostur, in the south of Macedonia. From this we see that the rebuilding was not directed by an accredited architect, but by one of the people who had learned his art in practice, like all the other Bulgarian master-builders of that time.

Fig. 41. — Capital from the church of St. Nedelia in Sofia; beginning of the 19th cent.

The principal church has kept the cruciform construction with a cupola, and has an open colonnade running round the exterior of the building (Plate IX). By using different kinds of stone and red bricks as was the custom in early Bulgarian architecture (s. page 20), a particularly artistic effect has been obtained. The whole of the interior of the church and the walls of the colonnade were painted by native artists, who, for the most part, belonged to the local school of Samokov. The richly decorated iconostasis, which we shall consider later, and the other wood-carving, complete the wonderful effect of the building (Plate XLV). The dwellings of the monks surround the court and are several stories high, while along them, on the court side, there run open colonnades (Plate X). Here, too, we see different building materials simulated by painting the walls. The top story has retained some typical features, with its wooden pillars and projecting balconies.

This tendency to decorate the exterior of buildings by painting them, which is also to be seen in the buildings of the Rila monastery, is particularly characteristically shown in the church of the monastery of the Transfiguration (Preobrajenski Monastir) near Tirnovo (Fig. 42). That this was no modern innovation, but the continuation of the early Bulgarian tradition, can be seen from certain monuments belonging to the thirteenth century, and is doubtlessly connected with the former customary use of coloured building materials.

We know very little of domestic architecture during the period of the Turkish dominion, particularly that of the first centuries. We scarcely need say that the private

houses were as a rule very plain. They were generally built of rubble work and wood, therefore they never lasted very long, so that we have practically no houses more than a century old. For this reason it is impossible to trace the development of domestic architecture in Bulgaria for this period. We may draw conclusions concerning the past from the buildings of the beginning of the nineteenth century, considering also the dwelling-houses of the fourteenth century (s. page 18), which were preserved in Arbanassi with little alterations down to the eighteenth century. In well wooded mountainous districts, as for instance in Drenovo, the houses were frequently built

Fig. 42. — The church in the monastery of the Transfiguration near Tirnovo; 19th cent.

entirely of wood (Fig. 43). In the larger towns they were usually several stories high and frequently had an overhanging upper story (Fig. 44). The exterior was very plain and only at a later date, under the influence of western Europe, was any ornamentation of the façade appreciated, when we very often see native and western styles combined (Fig. 45).

On the other hand the interior arrangement of the better houses shows that the inhabitants cared for a certain artistic decoration. The wooden ceilings were generally very richly carved (Fig. 46 and Plate XI). Immovable wooden presses, a low hearth and sometimes open semicircular niches in the walls, or a large tile stove, gave an original appearance to the rooms (Fig. 47). The walls were usually white-washed and in some cases, as in the Kandilarov house in Arbanassi, they were ornamented with plaster reliefs (Plate XI).

2. PAINTING.

Under the dominion of the Turks, the Bulgarians were forced to make the exterior of their churches as plain as possible, but some compensation for this was offered by the rich decoration lavished upon the interior which escaped the eye of the foreigner. For this reason, the art of decorative wall-painting continued to develop naturally, while the art of building continued to decline. Mural pictures however suffered from the general state of decadence into which art had fallen, and therefore remained too closely

Fig. 43. — Dwelling house in Drenovo.

bound by earlier traditions. But there were no restrictions placed on wall-painting at this period. It was only necessary to keep within certain modest limits and those great artistic personalities which only appear when art is allowed to develop freely, were lacking, so that there were none to impart a new direction to the wall-painting of that day.

The existing monuments do not at all equally represent the different centuries of Turkish rule. For while we have but very few remains of any importance which belong to the fifteenth century, we have a great wealth of material belonging to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Among the earliest monuments of this period we may mention the pictures in the small church of St. Demetrius in Boboshevo (Kustendil district). They were painted

Fig. 44. — Street in Ochrida.

in 1488, but are of no great artistic interest. The frescoes — now almost destroyed — in the monastery of Kremikovtzi near Sofia, are of about the same date (1493). The great portrait-picture which is to be seen in the vestibule (Plate LV), calls for notice. Here we see represented, on the left, a certain Radivoi with his wife, both wearing

robes richly embroidered in colors, the lady with unusually heavy earrings, while Radivoi himself holds in his hands a model of the church, as it was custom to represent the founders of the churches at that time. It seems that on the death of their two children, Theodore and Dragna, who also appear in the picture, the parents founded this church and had it painted. The figure without an aureole, which we see in the foreground on the right, probably represents the abbot. In the background, there is an archangel, and in the upper part we see Christ in heaven, with outspread hands

Fig. 45. — Dwelling house in Samokov.

in the attitude of blessing. We notice the delicate treatment of the detail, and more especially, the effort of the artist to bring out the individual expression of each face. On this account the faces of the archangel and the high church dignitary are particularly interesting, for, while the former has idealized, if not perfectly regular features, the latter has been very realistically drawn and may be called a master-piece of his kind.

The frescoes in the monastery of Poganovo, executed in 1500, are of even greater artistic value, but we are unfortunately not able to give any reproductions of them. Here too, we find the artist not satisfied with merely copying ancient models, but striving to introduce something new and personal.

Of the sixteenth century there are no other paintings worthy of mention. The seventeenth century however offers excellent material. The paintings in the church of St. George in Tirnovo (now destroyed) belong to the very beginning of the century (1616). The picture which represents the Death of the Virgin has already been mentioned (Plate XVI 2; s. page 31). The "Wedding in Cana" which is in this church (Plate XVI 1), is worthy ot notice because it belongs to those subjects which were rarely painted at that time. The pictures in Nedobarsko in the east of Macedonia are of about the same date (1614). Then follow those in the monastery of Zarze near Prilep which

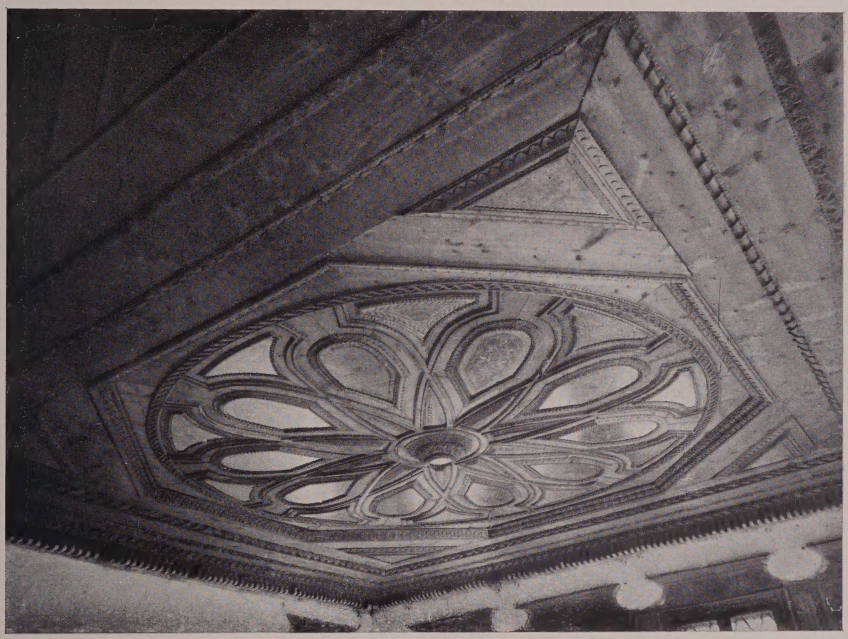

Fig. 46. — Carved wooden ceiling in a house of Samokov.

were painted between 1625 and 1636. It is interesting to compare the Christ enthroned of this church (Fig. 48) with that in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo dating from the fourteenth century (Plate LIII). The arrangement is the same in both cases, but in Zarze the drawing is much harder, and there is much less warmth and life in the execution. We do not find the same breadth of conception which we see in the painting of Tirnovo. Instead of the sky — indicated by stars — we have a decorative background with architectural features, which dwarfs the effect of the composition.

The paintings in the vestibule of the large monastery church of Batshkovo, dating from 1643, are of quite a different type. Below, there are life size figures of some of the saints wearing very richly embroidered garments beautifully decorated with gold

embroidery. Next to these we see the portrait of a certain George — who had the vestibule painted at his expense — and that of his son Constantine (Plate LVI). These two are also wearing costly robes embroidered with gold. The artist seems to have attached very great importance to the decorative effect of his picture, which explains the unusual wealth of ornamentation and design on the robes, where no two patterns are alike. The plastic character of the figures certainly suffered very much from this.

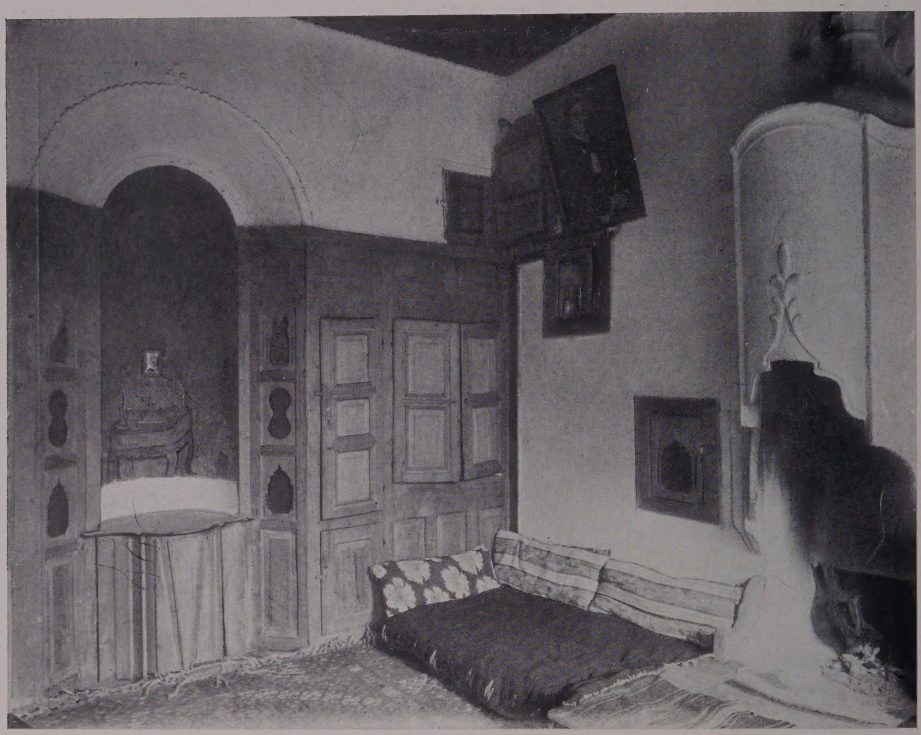

Fig. 47. — Sitting-room in a house of Ochrida.

Rigidity and lack of softness are the two characteristics of these very formally drawn figures, with their straight foldless robes and expressionless features.

The other pictures in the vestibule show the same preference for a purely decorative effect with bright and powerful colouring. Particularly splendid too, are the sharply drawn-figures of the cupola, the rich effect of which is greatly heightened by the use of much gold on a blue ground (Plate XIX).

We find very valuable material in the different churches of Arbanassi, near Tirnovo. Let us first consider the mural paintings in the church of Christ (Fig. 49), which were executed between 1632 and 1649, and show a great variety of subjects. We here find

a series of larger compositions, portraying the miracles of Christ (Fig. 51), as well as the usual pictures of Saints (Fig. 50). We must also call attention to the frescoes of the oecumenical synods, which were evidently influenced by the wall-paintings of the same subject, in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo. Let us take the picture of the fifth synod in the church of Christ (Fig. 52), and compare it with the painting of the fourth synod in Tirnovo (Plate LIII). Together with a similar disposition of the figures, we find, in Arbanassi, a dryer and much more formal style of execution, which in all the details and accessories aims at simplicity. This is particularly noticeable

Fig. 48. — Christ enthroned between the Virgin and St. John the Baptist.
Wall-painting in the monastery church of Zarze near Prilep; 17th cent.

in the figure of the Emperor who presides over the assembly, but who no longer wears the rich Byzantine robes we saw in Tirnovo, so familiar to the artists of the fourteenth century, but forgotten by the painters of the seventeenth century.

The church of Christ in Arbanassi is, further, noted for its pictorial calendar, similar to that found in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo. Each day is illustrated with a scene representing the appropriate event from the church calendar. We here give an example taken from the months of September and October (Fig. 53).

As examples of the frescoes in the church of St. George in Arbanassi, dating from 1710, we would call attention to the painting of the Virgin, in the apse, and to some of the pictures in the altar room (Plate XVII and XVIII). The Virgin is worth noticing on account of the very careful execution and the deep intensity of feeling which the artist has here expressed. Among the other wall-paintings in Arbanassi we

may mention those in the church of St. Athanasius of the year 1726, and those in the church of the Archangels of the year 1760. But it must be noticed that the execution is here much less careful, and that these paintings have by no means the high artistic value of the older work in the same town.

The fact that the artists signed their work in Arbanassi is of the greatest importance. Thus we learn that the pictures dating from 1710, in the church of St. George, are the handiwork of the artists Christo and Stoio. The chapel in the church of

Fig. 49. — The church of Christ in Arbanassi; the north narthex; 17th cent.

St. Athanasius was also painted in 1726 by two companions, Zoio and Nedio, and the artists Michael, from Salonica, and George, from Bucharest, worked in 1760 in that part of the church of the Archangels which was reserved for women. As the names indicate — some of them, such as Stoio, Zoio, and Nedio are purely Bulgarian — all these artists were of Bulgarian origin. This is further confirmed by the fact that the artists who painted the pictures in the church of St. George, and who everywhere else signed the accompanying explanations in Greek, as their companions in Arbanassi did, have here signed and dated their work in Bulgarian as well as in Greek. This is a further proof of what we mentioned above (page 39), that is that a Greek inscription on any work of art is no decisive proof of the nationality of the author. It is easy to explain the fact that Bulgarian artists also frequently used Greek, when we realize

that the Greek language was, at that time, the universal language of the educated classes, and as much used as Latin was in the West until late in the nineteenth century, when it disappeared as a result of the great national awakening in Bulgaria. What we find in Arbanassi, we found again in many other places. I should like to point out one very good example. The church-painter Zachari Christov, from the town of Samokov which is purely Bulgarian, who in 1840 painted the church of St. Nicholas in the

Fig. 50. — Wall-paintings in the chapel of the church of Christ in Arbanassi; 17th cent.

monastery of Batshkovo, expressly signed himself a Bulgarian, but, although he thought it necessary, according to the custom of the time, to mention his nationality in this way, he did not disdain to use the Greek language.

Under Turkish rule, ecclesiastical mural paintings merely continued the old Bulgarian tradition, and underwent no far-reaching changes either in conception or in technic. The conservative tendency continued predominant and remained, with but few exceptions, untouched by any influences from the art of the West. The painters worked according to the sacred canons of ancient tradition and cared more for accurate work and clear

drawing than for any freer treatment of the subject. For this reason their work remains very primitive and, if it does not happen to be dated, might easily be placed at a

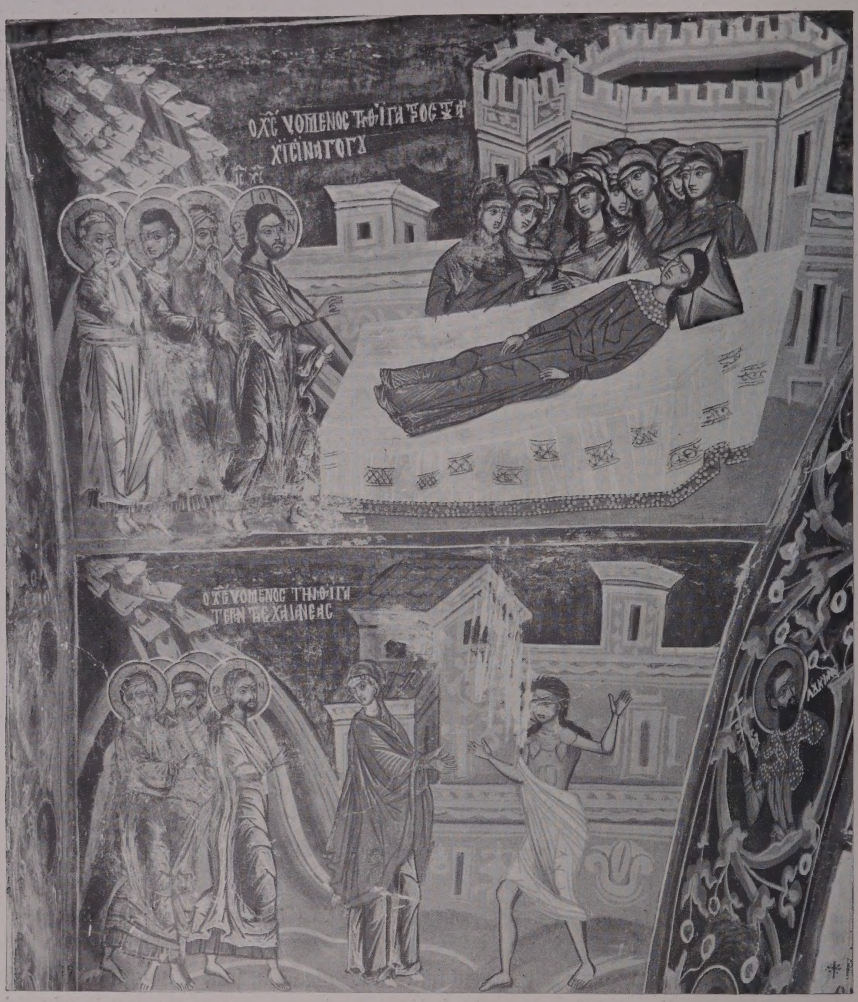

Fig. 51. — The miracles of Christ.
Wall-paintings in the narthex of the church of Christ in Arbanassi; 17th cent.

much earlier period. It is typical of these paintings that neither the half tones nor the shadows are fully developed, so that the perspective is very faulty. It is usually indicated in the same way as it is on the old Greek vases, where a perspective effect is obtained by one figure being placed in front of another and cutting across it. The flat treatment

of the picture became a principle, and very often gives the impression, not only in separate figures, but also in larger compositions, of coloured outline drawings. Very characteristic, and fully in accordance with the decorative aim of the picture, is the stiffly conventional method of painting all the figures, and even the detail of the landscape; the wall-paintings in Arbanassi are good examples of this method. In the

Fig. 52. — The fifth œcumenical synod.
Wall-painting in the narthex of the church of Christ in Arbanassi; 17th cent

course of time this hard conventionality increases until the style becomes utterly rigid and lifeless. There is a tendency to express anatomical details, but it is always done in a more studied than natural manner (Fig. 50, 51, 53). The same remark is true of the architectural details which, particularly at this period, were very much used to decorate the backgrounds, and which are sometimes remarkable for the wealth of decorative forms they display (Fig. 51, 53 and Plate XVIII). These paintings are generally in no way works of art, revealing a strong feeling for nature, neither do they draw

their inspiration direct from life; they are the products of an art for the most part mechanical, acquired by long practice and at the cost of infinite pains.

Church wall-paintings were generally executed by wandering artists. If any one of them earned the reputation of being a gifted artist, he was offered work not only in the neighbourhood, but often in remote towns. We are indeed unable to prove that this happened in the earlier Turkish period as it can be proved for the first half of the nineteenth century. But the fact, that in Arbanassi two artists from such far distant towns as Salonica and Bucharest, were working together suffices to show us that this practice was customary in former times.

To what extent local schools had, at this time, been formed, and how far they were connected with each other, we are not at present able to ascertain, since the monuments have not yet been gathered together and classified. We can, so far, only say with certainty, that the most important centres for ecclesiastical mural painting in the Balkan peninsula were the monasteries on Mount Athos, and that all the local schools were, more or less, dependant on their models. The high reputation of these monasteries, in which all the different Christian nationalities of the Balkans were represented, not only attracted many pilgrims, but formed what we may call an advanced school where the different branches of ecclesiastical art might be studied by those who in any way intended to devote themselves to the study of this art. For Bulgaria, we must first take into consideration the monastery of Zograf, where the monk Paissi, the first Bulgarian historian of modern times and the precursor of the national movement in Bulgaria, then lived and worked. This monastery doubtlessly served as the most important link between the church painters of Mount Athos and those in Bulgaria. But in many other monasteries also, particularly at an earlier period, before the national quarrels became so violent, we often find Bulgarian monks and artists occupying prominent positions. It is therefore impossible to draw any sharp dividing line between the church art of Mount Athos and that of Bulgaria, or to decide how far each was useful to the other.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a fresh impulse was given to church wall-painting. This was the result of the great national awakening in Bulgaria and of the great church-building activity which developed at this time (see page 45). The excellent opportunities for work and the greatly increased production led to the formation of many local schools, among which those of Samokov, Razlog and Krushevo were the most important.

The school of Samokov produced artists and teachers of great ability, not only in wall-painting, but also in pictures on panel, as the work done in Samokov itself, in the monastery of Rila, in some of the monasteries on Mount Athos, in the monastery of Batshkovo, in Pleven, Philippopel, Tatar-Pazardjik, Scopie, Veles, Kratovo, Kotshani, in the neighbourhood of Salonica and many other places in the Bulgaria of to-day and in Macedonia, will show. It is generally assumed that the founder of this school was Christo Dimitrov, from the village of Dospey near Samokov, who had studied fresco-painting at Mount Athos. In 1770 he went to Vienna for a time, but soon

Fig. 53. — Part of the pictorial calendar in the church of Christ in Arbanassi; 17th cent.

retourned to Samokov, where he taught the art to his two sons Zachari and Dimiter Christov, so that fresco-painting remained a tradition in the family for many decades.

Fig. 54. — Christ enthroned.
Icon from Mesembria, dated 1604 (Sofia, National Museum).

The most gifted representative of the school of Samokov was Stanislav Dospevski, a son of Dimiter Christov and a grand-son of the founder of the school Christo Dimitrov. Stanislav Dospevski lived a long time in Russia, in Kiev and in Odessa,

in order to perfect himself in his art. In 1857 he finished his studies in the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg, winning the silver medal, and returned to Bulgaria. In 1870, after great activity in portrait and landscape painting, as well as in church wall-painting, he was arrested by the Turks for political reasons, and shortly afterwards poisoned in prison at Constantinople.

Fig. 55. — Christ enthroned.
Icon from Tirnovo, dated 1684 (Sofia, National Museum).

The school of Razlog (the district between the Rila and Pirin mountains) whose influence was not very widespread, was founded, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by Dimiter Molerov from Bansko and continued by his descendants. The school of Krushevo also only attained a certain local importance and its representatives worked chiefly in central Macedonia.

To investigate more closely the work of these artists and to describe their methods of working, does not come within the scope of this publication. They too, as the church demanded, followed the old models so that their work may be considered as forming the last stage in the development of the ancient mural painting in Bulgaria. On the other hand, many of them were in close touch with the art of the West, and their work begins to show the spirit of modern times. There were also no lack of attempts to give a new direction to the art of fresco-painting. Such an attempt was made by the painter Nikolai Pavlovitsh, from Svishtov, the most important representative of Bulgarian historical painting which began to flourish at this time. But at this point modern Bulgarian art begins, and the two branches can no longer be considered separately.

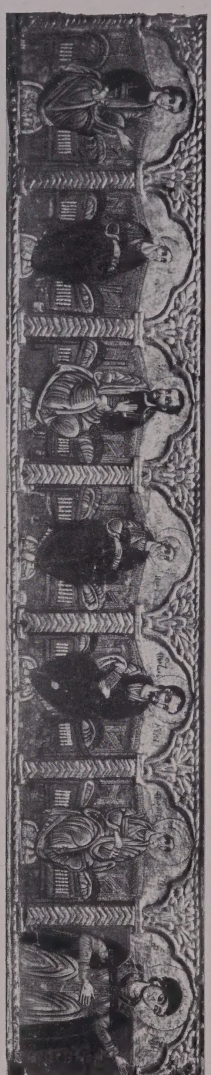

Fig. 56. — Painted wooden frieze from Lutakovo, left part. Beginning of the 18th cent. (Sofia, National Museum).

* * *

We also have a great number of church pictures on panels, for the same period, more particularly since the seventeenth century. As this material has not yet been systematically studied or arranged, we must be content to call attention to some work, for the most part dated, which is typical of the different tendencies of panel-picture painting. Let us first consider two pictures of Christ, which, although coming from different districts, show a very great resemblance. The older picture (Fig. 54) from Mesembria belongs to the year 1604, the second, from Tirnovo, is dated 1684 (Fig. 55). Both are noticeable for the comparatively free treatment of the figures and for a fondness for gold, which is much used in the background as well as on the robes. Quite different in style is the picture of St. Nicholas, from the church in Vratza, dedicated to this saint (Plate XXIII). It also belongs to the last decade of the seventeenth century. Face and robes are here very conventionally treated, no gold at all is used in the picture, and in the black and white ornamentation the cross takes the predominating place. There are two more very similar paintings from the same church, one of Christ and another of the Virgin, which date from the year 1699. These, as well as the picture of St. Nicholas, are now in the National Museum in Sofia. The two last-named pictures, which show more careless workmanship, were not painted by the author of the picture of St. Nicholas, but undoubtedly belong to the same local school of Vratza.

The narrow frieze of pictures from Lutakovo (Orchanie district) is an excellent piece of work and probably dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Christ is represented enthroned in the centre, between the Virgin and St. John the Baptist (Fig. 57); on the right and on the left, there were originally six apostles, but of these only half remain (Fig. 56). The pictures, which are most delicately executed (Plate XXIV), are separated from each other by small columns, which are carved and gilded. We may finally mention two more pictures of the year 1768, which belong to the Trevna school, where the art of panel-painting was particularly studied. These pictures have a claim to interest because they are signed. The painting of Christ (Fig. 58) is done by "Portrait-painter Papa Vitan from Trevna", and the picture of St. Nicholas (Fig. 59) by "Portrait-painter Simeon from the town of Trevna". This little town lies in the Balkan mountains near Tirnovo and took, at one time, a leading part in the intellectual life of Bulgaria.

Fig. 57. — Painted wooden frieze from Lutakovo, middle part.
Beginning of the 18th cent. (Sofia, National Museum).

The art of miniature-painting seems, already at this period, to have greatly declined. Richly illustrated manuscripts, such as we saw written for the Czars in the fourteenth century, now no longer appear. We only find here and there a few miniatures of saints, such as those of the evangelist Marcus, in two manuscripts of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, in the monastery of Ptshino in Macedonia (Plate XXV and LVIII). On the other hand coloured vignettes and decorated initials became very popular and are frequently to be seen in all the better manuscripts of this period. In these manuscripts, early Bulgarian ornament reached a high point of development, so that they are of great importance for the study of this branch of art.

3. APPLIED ART.

The rule of the Turks greatly influenced and changed the economic conditions of Bulgaria. The disinclination of the govering race for any kind of manual work, the primitive means of communication and the poorly organised state of foreign trade, led to a great development of the applied arts among the Bulgarians in the towns. It may even be said that where there was a mixed population, these trades remained in the hands of the Bulgarians. For this reason they were able to devote themselves more freely and intensively to the minor arts and crafts, than to the other branches of art.

Fig. 58. — Christ blessing.
Icon from Trevna, dated 1768 (Sofia, National Museum).

Fig. 59. — St. Nicholas.
Icon from Trevna, dated 1768 (Sofia, National Museum).

The distinctive feature of the Bulgarian applied arts is their undeniably popular character. The master-workers belonged to the people themselves and worked almost entirely for the people. They passed through no particular schools and the aristocratic arts of the capital remained unknown to them. Their only standard was the art tradition which had been kept alive among the people; for this reason the work which these artists produced has often retained much that is characteristic of very early art, in style as well as in ornament.

Fig. 60. — Pewter flask; 18th cent.
Sofia, Ethnographical Museum.

All popular art is very conservative. This observation is particularly applicable to the applied arts of Bulgaria, which were much less affected by foreign influences, than were their architecture and painting. Therefore if we wish to examine the popular art of Bulgaria more closely, we must first of all study the products of their applied arts, particularly the ornaments and embroideries belonging to their national costume. We cannot here notice in detail these objects which require to be described on quite a different scale. We will merely mention some of the most typical decorative ornaments in metal work which belong to the older costume and are partly enamelled or set

with coloured stones, such as girdle-clasps, diadems or fillets, necklaces and earrings (Plate XXVI—XXVIII). As far as embroidery is concerned, it is sufficient to call attention to the two beautiful albums published by the Bulgarian Ministry of Commerce, which

Fig. 61. — Silver cross, made in Tshiprovtzi; 17th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

contain quite a number of typical examples, excellently reproduced in colours. In all these objects, in the heavy shapes and the very conventional ornament of the jewellery, in the brightly coloured gay embroidery patterns which recall oriental carpets, we find that the main features of early Bulgarian art have best been preserved. The pronounced oriental note did not appear as a result of the Turkish penetration, for it was, as we have already seen, a characteristic of the earliest Bulgarian art which

originated in the East. That there can here be no question of Turkish influence, may easily be seen from the fact that similar work is no where to be found among the Turks.

More important than these national ornaments and embroideries, which are more of ethnological interest (compare also the pewter flask Fig. 60), are some other objects of art which were destined for special purposes, and were intended to be masterpieces. Foremost among these, one must consider the ecclesiastical objects, particularly those of metal work and wood-carving.

Fig. 62. — Silver-gilt bowl, made in Sofia in 1578.
Sofia, National Museum.

The town of Tshiprovtzi in the north-west of Bulgaria was for a time an important centre of metal work in gold, silver and bronze. The artists of this town were considered exceptionally skilled craftsmen, also in the art of enamelling, and their work which is often signed, is to be found throughout Bulgaria. Let us take as an example the large silver-gilt bowl, partly enriched with enamels, belonging to the year 1644, now in the monastery of Batshkovo (Plate XXIX 1). According to the detailed inscription in Bulgarian it was made in Tshiprovtzi and was the gift of a certain Theodossi of Peshtera. We have further a silver-cross from the same town, dating from the seventeenth century, which is now in the National Museum in Sofia (Plate XXXI and Fig. 61).

In the treasure-chamber of the monastery of Batshkovo there is a series of enamelled vessels, some of which are enriched with precious stones, a few of which

Fig. 63. — Silver altar-piece in the church of the Virgin in Tatar-Pazardjik.
Beginning of the 19th cent.

are reproduced in plate XXIX 3 and XXX 1—3. Some of them belong to the seventeenth century, and others to the beginning of the eighteenth. Unfortunately, we cannot discover where these different objects were made. More probably, we think, in some town in the south of Bulgaria, possibly Philippopel or Tatar-Pazardjik, where

the goldsmith's art was very highly developed, rather than in Tshiprovtzi. Turkish influence can already be seen in these vessels and is clearly shown in the ornamentation of the casket in Plate XXX 1. The enamelled jug Plate XXX 3, also in the monastery of Batshkovo, is in style and decoration pure Turco-Persian, although the Bulgarian inscription shows that it is probably the handiwork of some Bulgarian artist. Turkish influence is, however, much more noticeable in all the important specimens of the goldsmith's art, where the artist attempted something elaborate and took his designs from different sources, without concern for purity of style; whereas it shows less in the personal ornaments belonging to the national costume, where the style was fixed by the unbroken tradition of centuries. Turkish is for instance the ornamentation on a silver-gilt bowl adorned with the picture of St. Nicholas (Fig. 62), now in the Sofia museum, although, according to the detailed inscription in Bulgarian, it was made in Sofia in 1578, by a Bulgarian artist.

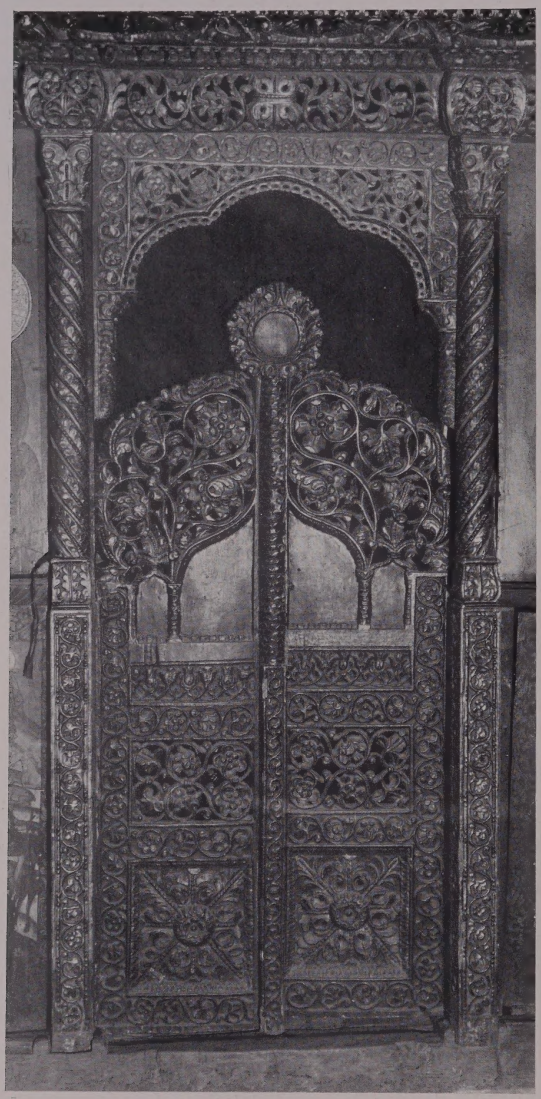

Fig. 64. — Carved wooden door in the church of Christ in Arbanassi. 17th cent.

Among the other works of art which are dated and therefore very important for the history of art, we may mention two volumes of the gospels with metal decoration on the covers, engraved with inscriptions in Bulgarian and signed by the makers, now in the National Museum in Sofia. The one (Plate XXXII) dates from the year 1596 and comes from the

neighbourhood of Shtip in Macedonia, the other (Plate XXXIII) is from Philippopel and is dated 1743. We may also mention the silver altar-piece in the church of the Virgin in Tatar-Pazardjik (Fig. 63), for although it only dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century, we learn from the inscription that it is the work of a native Bulgarian silversmith and is in fact closely copied from some earlier models.

Drinking cups made from hollowed-out pumpkins with a long and evenly curved handles are used everywhere in Bulgaria. At a very early period this shape was imitated in metal. Two beautiful specimens, worked in silver, dating from 1797 and 1799, belong to the monastery of Rila (Plate XXIX 2). There, the handle terminates in a very conventionally treated lion's head, which is remarkably closely related to certain types of the earliest Bulgarian art (cf. Plate II 3 and p. 6).

* * *

The wood-carving of this period is joined closely with the productions of the fourteenth century. Bands of interlaced ornament and tracery rosettes remain predominant for a time. We find them very richly employed in the decoration on a door in the monastery of Sleptsha, near Bitolia, which probably belongs to the fifteenth century (Plate XXXVI). In the complicated interlacing tracery, decorating the two upper panels, we can clearly distinguish the cross as the principal motive; in the centre on the left we see the Virgin in prayer with a medallion of Christ, and on the right the Crucifixion. Round these there are a number of saints and prophets woven into the design, and to the left there are explanatory inscriptions in Bulgarian. In the same style, but of a later date we have a door, with two wings, in the same monastery (Plate XXXVII). Some saints are carved at the top. Below, we see different animals and other profane subjects; in the middle of the left wing, for instance, there is a man playing a gusla and on the right wing, as pendant, we see a man playing a tambour.

We have a number of altar screen-doors dating from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, which allow us to trace more closely the further development of geometric tracery. We will place at the beginning of the series the door from the church of St. Petka in Tirnovo (Plate XXXVIII 2), which belongs to the fifteenth century. The ornamentation, still very simple and flat, is remarkably clear. On the door in the church of St. Clement in Ochrida, which is about a century later in date, the interlaced tracery changes into an irregular design, in which we already find scattered floral motives, wheras we find the old interlaced tracery rosettes only in the lower panels (Plate XXXVIII 1). Two more doors of the seventeenth century, one from the chapel in the church of Christ in Arbanassi (Plate XXXIX 1), the other from the village church

Fig. 65. Carved wooden column from Arbanassi. 17th cent.

of Bojenitza near Orchanie (Plate XXXIX 2) show the growing penetration of floral motives. On the door in the central part of the church of Christ in Arbanassi, which dates from the end of the seventeenth century, the geometric tracery is already replaced by the familiar ornament of conventionalised running foliage with flowers (Fig. 64). Finally, we will mention a door and a press in the mosque of Pazvantoglu in Vidin, the work of Bulgarian craftsmen of the end of the eighteenth century (Plate XL and

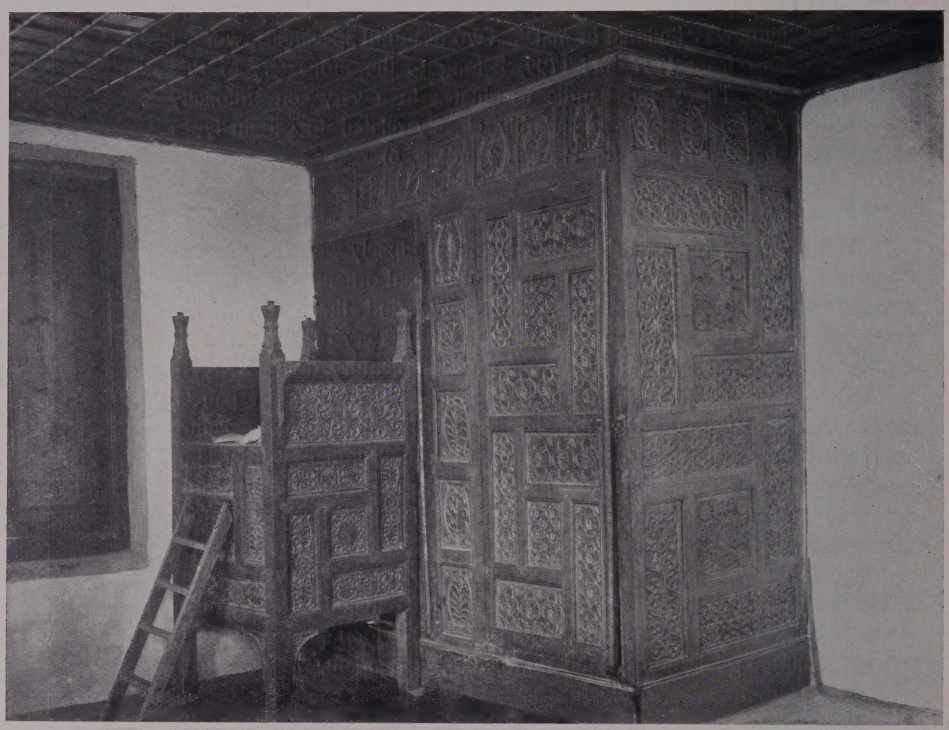

Fig. 66. — Carved wooden press in the mosque of Pazvantoglu in Vidin.
End of the 18th cent.

Fig. 66). The decoration of these pieces resembles that on the above mentioned door of Arbanassi (Fig. 64); the ornamentation is conventionalised running foliage with floral designs.

All that we can discover from the altar doors concerning the development of ancient Bulgarian ornament, is again confirmed by the study of the complete iconostasis. The oldest complete iconostasis we possess is that in the church of St. Vratsh in Ochrida, which may be placed in the sixteenth century. The carved wooden columns are the most interesting feature of the lower part, whereas the screen

door shows interlaced tracery ornamentation of concentric circles, and on the upper part of the screen, on the crosses and icons, we already find very conventionalised floral designs. Similar to this, but much more delicate in workmanship, and of a little later date, is the ornament on the iconostasis of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo (Plate V); only it must be noticed that the door is not part of the original screen and dates from the second half of the eighteenth century.

Fig. 67. — Carved wooden support from the monastery of Zarze near Prilep; 18th cent.

It is only possible to gain a clear idea of the general effect of these carved screens by studying the work of the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, as, for example, the iconostasis in the church of St. George in Arbanassi (Plate XLI). The extremely rich interlaced tracery is here lost in the conventional ornament of running foliage with flowers, and the latter predominates. The carving, much of which is open-work, shows a perfect mastery of this technically difficult work. In the long narrow bands of ornaments the different designs are con-

Fig. 68. — The interior of the monastery church of St. John of Bigor.
Beginning of the 19th cent.

tinually repeated, but they always appear new because of the slight variations which are introduced. These rich floral trails do not produce the same wearisome effect as the monotonously repeated stiff geometric forms, and therein lies their great artistic charm. The effect is so striking, that we need to look closer in order to distinguish the similarity of the main designs.

A very fine decorative feeling is revealed in the whole of the architectural construction of the iconostasis. The different sacred pictures are generally separated by small projecting pillars. The nearer the top of the screen the smaller the pictures become and the lighter the ornament grows. The complete screen produces the effect of a richly decorated façade, with the saints gazing through the windows.

This art attained its highest artistic excellence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the erection of a considerable number of important churches gave a fresh impulse to wood-carving. A complete iconostasis represents much difficult work and required several equally skilled craftsmen, who would consent to work together under the direction of a master artist. Because of this co-operation, although the different parts of the screen were done by different men, we often cannot detect any difference in the style. When the work in one place was finished, the group of artists was usually wanted somewhere else, so that the work of the same men is often found in widely separated places.

Not infrequently, the art of wood-carving was handed down as a tradition from father to son, in certain families, so that in the course of time schools for carving grew up in different places. One of the most important was that of Debra, in west Macedonia, and another the school of Samokov at the foot of the Rila mountains. The masters in the former of these schools, who had a long past behind them, came chiefly not from Debra itself, but from the neighbourhood. The best known come from the little Bulgarian town of Galitshnik, situated high in the mountains. The school of Samokov is of a later date and its success was due to the excellent work done in the newly erected monastery in Rila.

The principal motives of the designs which decorate the screens of this date were taken from the vine and rose tree which grew everywhere in the country; but they were much more naturally treated than in the earlier period. We find many different animals, chiefly birds and fantastic winged creatures, such as dragons or griffons, or scenes from the old and new Testaments and single human figures, very skillfully woven into the pattern. In this way an extraordinary wealth of motives appeared which enabled the artists to introduce a great variety in the different parts of the iconostasis, continually paying the greatest attention to the decorative effect. Instead of tiring the eye, these changes in the details acted as a stimulation and held the attention of the spectator. The figures and the open-work ornament are in very high relief so that the details stands out from the background, and the deep shadows considerably heighten the plastic effect. As the artists were continually looking for new subjects they drew their inspiration from widely different sources. Western influence also made itself strongly felt at this time. Together with the ancient forms

Fig. 69. — Carved wooden canopy in the monastery church of St. John of Bigor.
Beginning of the 19th cent.

which had come down from the early Christian period and had been retained in the Orient throughout the middle ages, certain elements now appear, which we may classify under Baroco or Roccoco. But in spite of this eclecticism the artists of the time were guided by a true artistic feeling which enabled them to combine all the excellences of the different styles in such a manner as to produce a harmonious effect.

The number of carved altar screens dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century is so great that we cannot mention them in detail here. We will only call attention to a few of the most important which are the work of the two above mentioned schools and are typical of the series.

One of the most important pieces of work of the Debra school is the screen in the monastery church of St. John of Bigor near Debra (Fig. 68). The panels under-

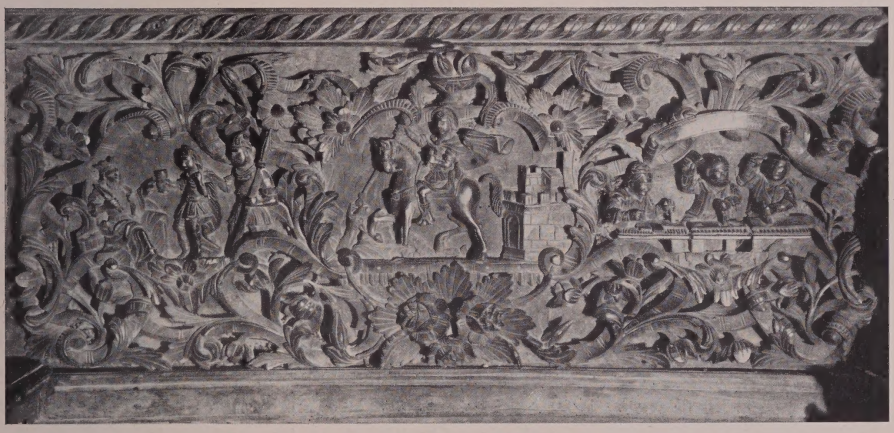

Fig. 70. — Details of the iconostasis in the church of St. Spas in Skopie.
Beginning of the 19th cent.

neath the large icons are very interesting with their numerous figures among which we see scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist or from the old Testament, such as the Cluster of grapes and Abraham's Sacrifice (Plate XLII). The artists also carved a picture of themselves and their tools (Plate XLII 2). One of the most interesting pieces of carving in the same church is the hanging canopy which is also decorated with numerous figures (Fig. 69).

Another similar screen, doubtlessly the work of the same artists, is to be seen in the church of St. Spas in Skopie. The ornamentation, the technical methods and the style of the figures, are exactly the same as on the screen of Bigor, as will be noticed if the two plates (XLII and XLIII) are compared. Here too, biblical scenes are to be seen below the large icons. We reproduce two of these in Plate XLIII. In the picture on the left, we see the Ascension in the middle, to the left the Nativity

and the Flight into Egypt, on the right Abraham's Sacrifice, and below, a cavalier wearing the costume of Debra, with his horse. In the middle of the picture on the right we see the Virgin going up to the Temple and on each side two lions in heraldic attitudes; to the left, there is the Birth of the Virgin, and to the right the Annunciation, above and below several birds are found introduced among the trailing foliage, and we see a lamb in the top left-hand corner. Here too, as in Bigor, the artists carved their portrait in one corner of the screen (Fig. 70). From a half-effaced inscription below we learn their names; they are Petre, Makaria and Marko, who sign themselves Bulgarians from Mala Reka near Debra. The inscription is dated 1824. From this we may conclude that the iconostasis of Bigor is of about the same date since it is evidently the work of the same group of artists.

Fig. 71. — Carved wooden door from Tatar-Pazardjik. Beginning of the 19th cent.

Another example of the work of the Debra school is the screen in the church of the Virgin in Tatar-Pazardjik, which is considered to belong to the year 1832. We reproduce the centre part of the screen in Plate XLIV. On the right of the altar-door in the upper row we see the Ascension in the centre, to the left the Nativity, to the right Abraham's Sacrifice and the Flight into Egypt. In the upper row on the left of the altar-door we see the Virgin going up to the Temple — with a detailed perspective view of the Temple — and in the upper right hand corner a very small representation of the Annunciation. In the flowing floral garlands there are, here and there, a few animals. On the two lowest panels, next to the altar-door, we see the Fall and the Expulsion from Paradise.

The screen in Tatar-Pazardjik is very different in style from the two above mentioned screens in Bigor and Skopie, although the technical manner is the same in both cases. The leaves of the plants are smaller and more delicately carved and the slender human figures form a sharp contrast to the short thick-set types in the work at Bigor and Skopie. In these points the screen in Tatar-Pazardjik resembles that in the church of St. Nicholas in Prishtina and it is quite possible that these two, which are very similar also in other details, are the work of the same artists.

The school of Samokov, which also attained its most brilliant period at the beginning of the nineteenth century, produced different work; the most important example of it is in the monastery of Rila. The masters of this school too, were found

of introducing animals into their designs, but they did not care for large compositions. They developed a still richer form of floral decoration, in which we clearly see the influence of the West. Their work is very fine and elegant, and gives proof of long and careful study; it forms a great contrast to the more naive and popular style of the Debra school. The large screen in the principal church of the monastery of Rila (Plate XLV and XLVI) and that in the church of the Virgin in Samokov (Plate XLVII) are the best examples of the work of this school. A screen in the Paraklis of the Rila monastery (Plate XLVIII) shows us that some artists occasionally broke away from the traditions and produced very original work. A beautiful door from Tatar-Pazardjik, which is interesting on account of the elegant proportions of the ornament (Fig. 71), is also to be attributed to the school of Samokov.

It would be very interesting to trace the gradual development of altar-screens which reached such an admirable state of perfection in Bulgaria, and to find out how far the work was connected with the other wood-carving in the East, particularly with that of Mount Athos; or to decide where the motives of the designs which are so widely different, originally came from. This would be a difficult task, because the necessary material has not yet been gathered together, and we are but imperfectly acquinted with the earliest period of this branch of art. We can only say with certainty that it is not of modern origin, but is born of a very old tradition and has kept much which is found in early Bulgarian art. It is very important to notice that, among the older monuments, the well known stone-façade from Mshatta in Syria, now in Berlin, forms the best parallel to this branch of Bulgarian art, if we try to arrive at any decision concerning its origin. Not only is the workmanship very similar in both cases — although the materials used are so different — but the style of the ornament is inspired by the same feeling and composed of the same essential elements, so that we feel the work to be intimately connected though the stone-façade is separated from the carved screens in Bulgaria by nearly ten centuries. Not less interesting is the fact that the scenes from the old Testament appearing frequently on the iconostasis are unknown to the official Byzantine iconography, and for this reason are not to be found among the church wall-paintings of that period.

* * *

We have tried to give a short summary of the history of early Bulgarian art down to modern times and to point out the special characteristics of its style, as far as the lack of any preliminary work and special research would allow. We have seen that in spite of the unfavourable conditions which existed under the rule of the Turks, this art did conserve its vitality and creative power, and was able to absorb many foreign elements without losing its independence. The great stimulus given to mural painting and wood-carving at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was the outcome of the national movement in Bulgaria and proved that the old art-traditions were not dead, but still lived among the people and only required some external impulse

to produce brilliant work. This impulse came from the struggle for freedom which roused all the energy and moral power of the nation. The fact that artistic activity was so strongly affected, is manifest evidence how deeply the artistic feeling was rooted in the soul of the people, and what an eminent position art always held in the intellectual life of the Bulgarians.

Fig. 72. — Carved wooden frame from Arbanassi.
17th cent.

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Rock relief of Madara near Shumen; 9th cent.

From the plaster-cast in the National Museum at Sofia.

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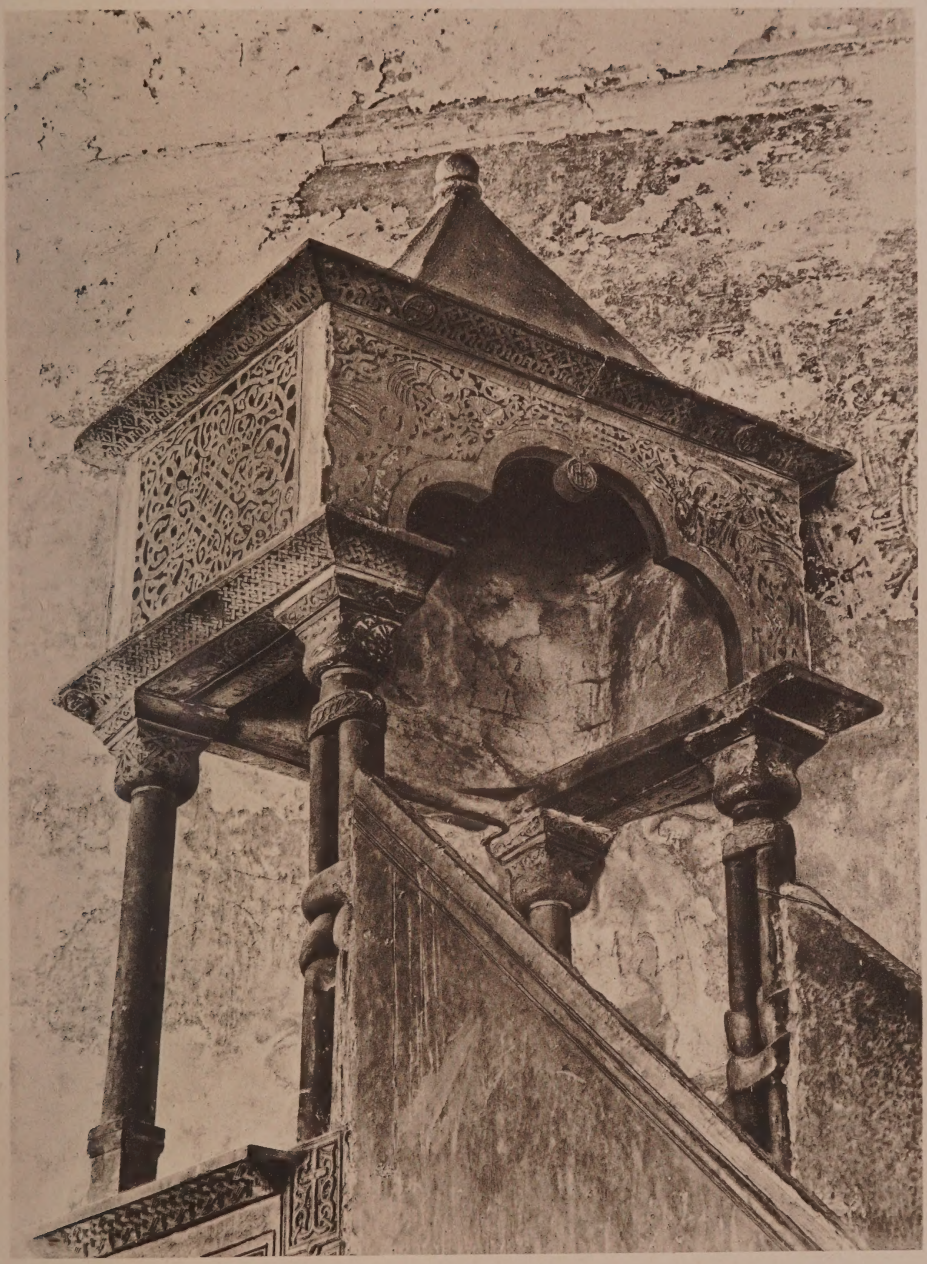
1 and 2: Reliefs of red sandstone from Stara-Zagora; 7th—8th cent.

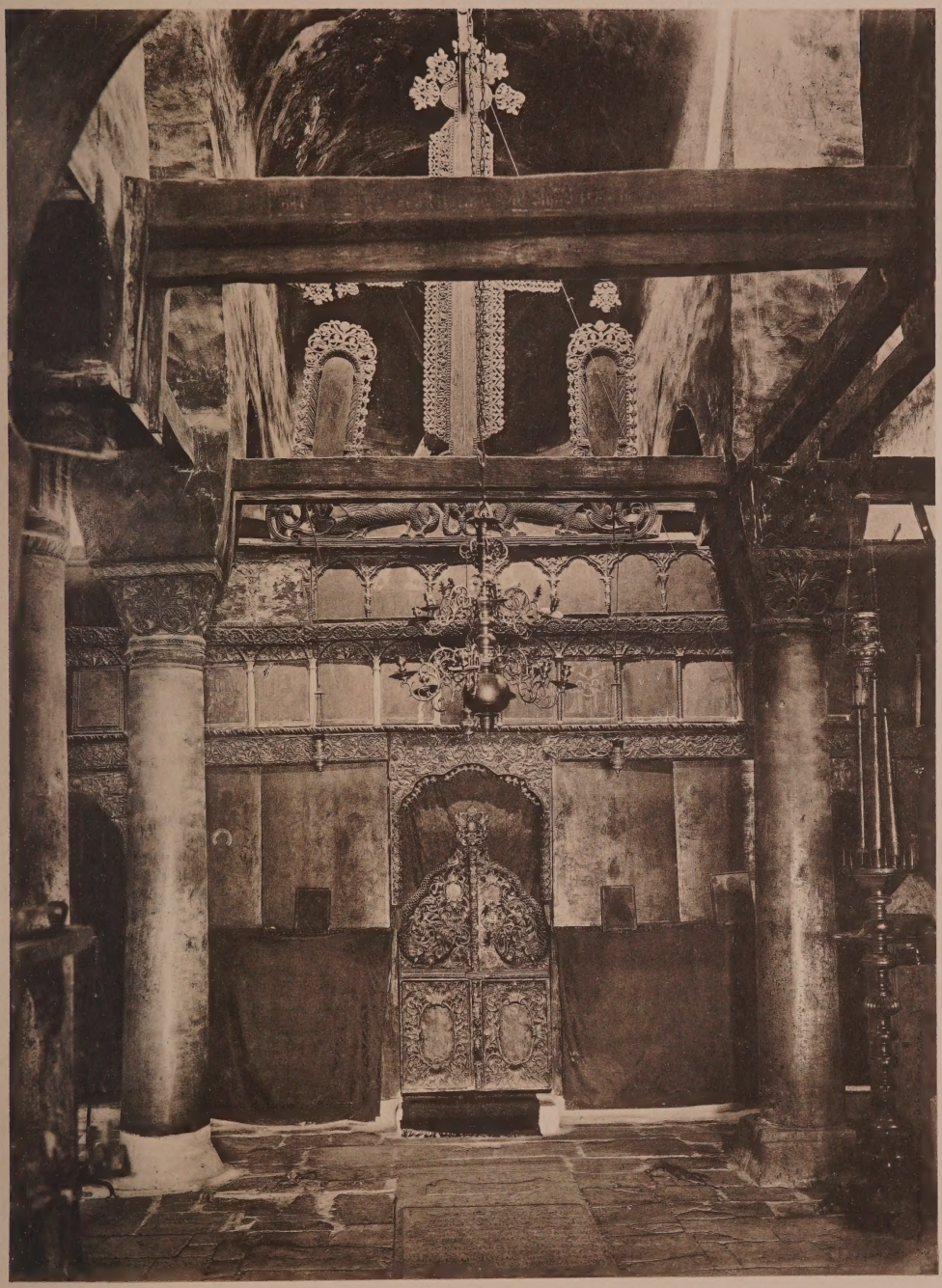
3 and 4: Marble slabs of a frieze from Drenovo; 7th—8th cent.

Sofia, National Museum.



Marble pulpit in the church of St. Sophia in Ochrida; 14th cent.

The church of Ivan Assen II near Stanimaka; 13th cent.



The interior of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo; 14th cent.

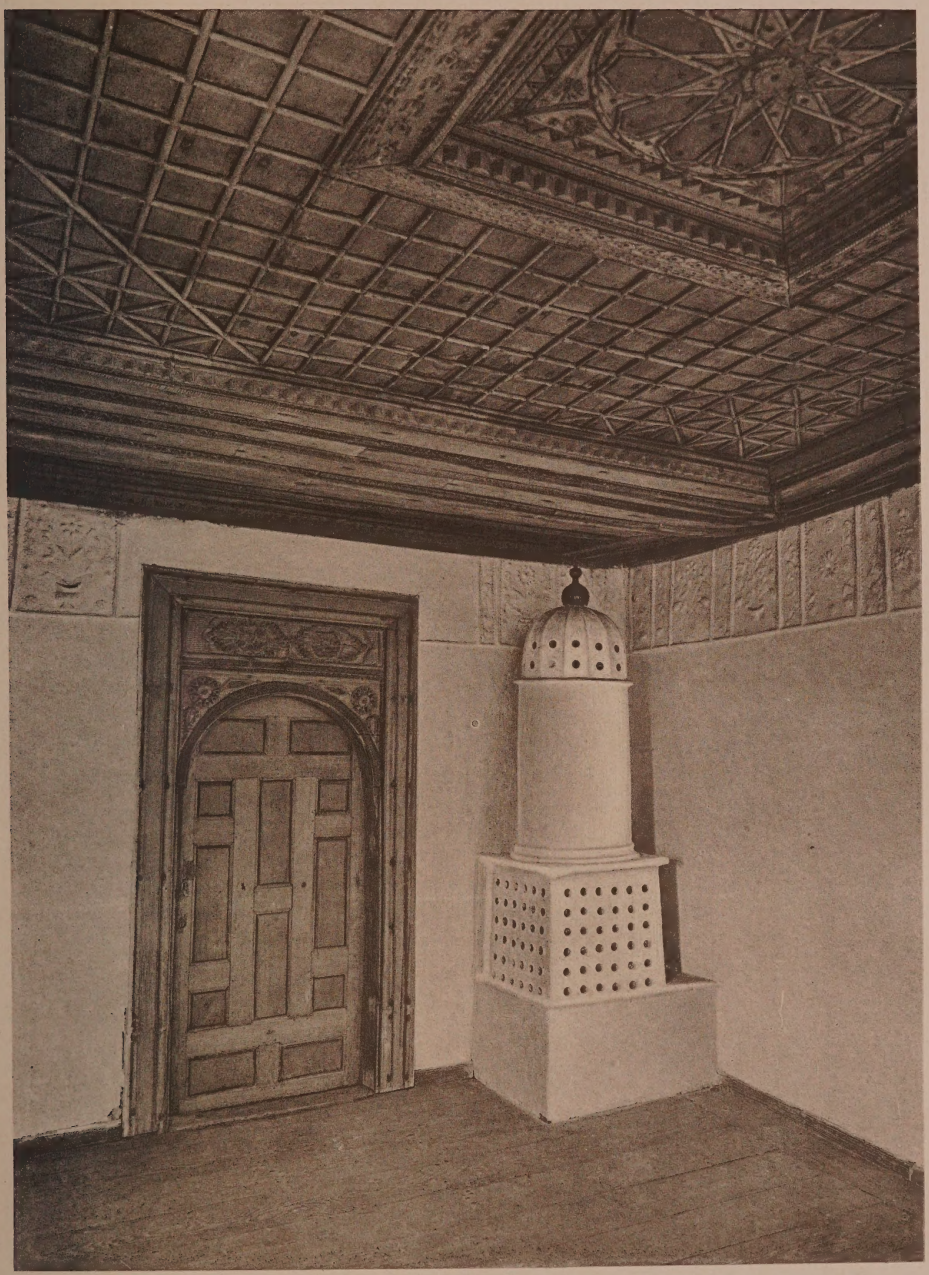
The church of St. Clement in Ochrida, south front; built in 1295.

The church of St. Clement in Ochrida, east front; built in 1295.

The interior of the church of St. Marina in Philippopel; beginning of the 19th cent.

The principal church in the monastery of St. John of Rila, west front.
Built in 1834—1837.

The dwelling rooms in the monastery of St. John of Rila; built in 1834—1837.



Sitting-room in the Kandilarov house in Arbanassi; 18th cent.

Christ in the Tempel conversing with the scribes.

Wall-painting of 1259 in the church of Boiana.

The Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Wall-painting of 1259 in the church of Boiana.

The death of the Virgin.

Wall-painting of 1259 in the church of Boiana.

St. Peter and St. Paul.

Wall-painting in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo; 14th cent.

2

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Wall-paintings of 1616 in the church of St. George in Tirnovo:
1. The Wedding in Cana. — 2. The Death of the Virgin.

Wall-paintings of 1710 in the apse of the church of St. George in Arbanassi.

Wall-paintings of 1710 in the church of St. George in Arbanassi.

Wall-paintings of 1643 in the principal church of the monastery of Batshkovo (the cupola of the narthex).

Christ blessing; icon from the church of St. Clement in Ochrida; 13th—14th cent.

The Virgin; icon from the church of St. Clement in Ochrida; 13th—14th cent.

The Virgin; icon from Mesembria; 14th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

The St. Nicholas; icon from Vratza; end of the 17th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

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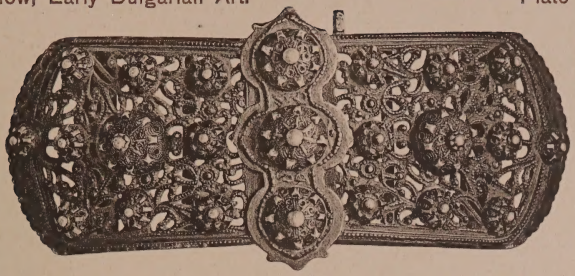
Pictures of the painted wooden frieze from Lutakovo; beginning of the 18th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

The Evangelist Marcus.

Miniature of a manuscript of the gospels; 16th—17th cent.

Sofia, National Museum.



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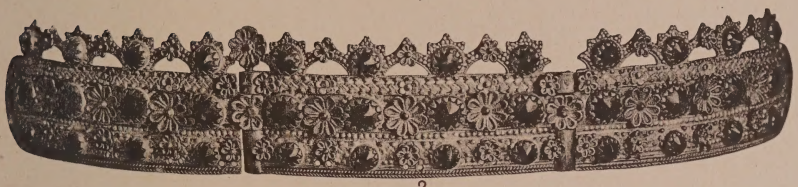

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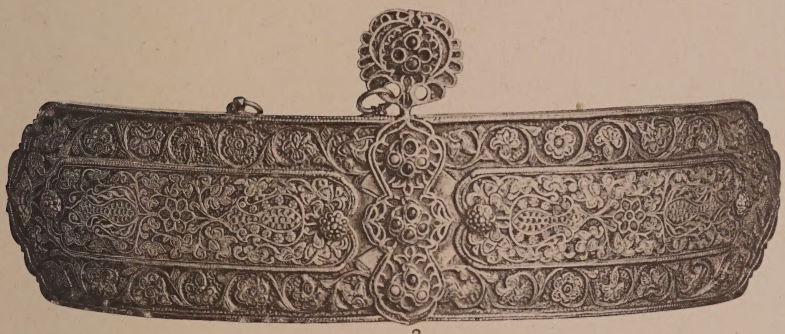

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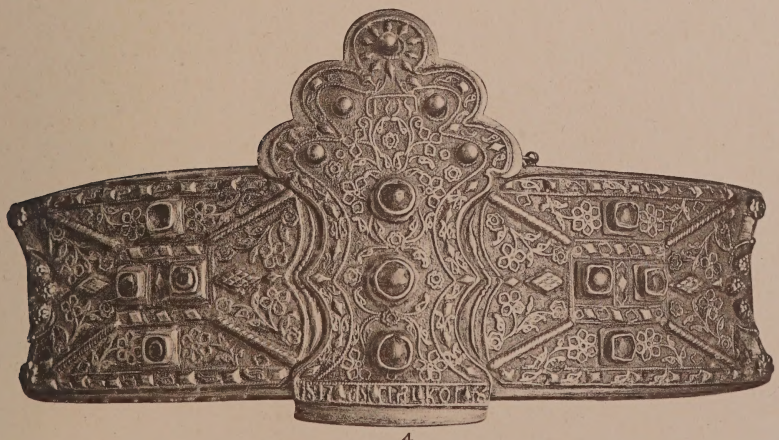

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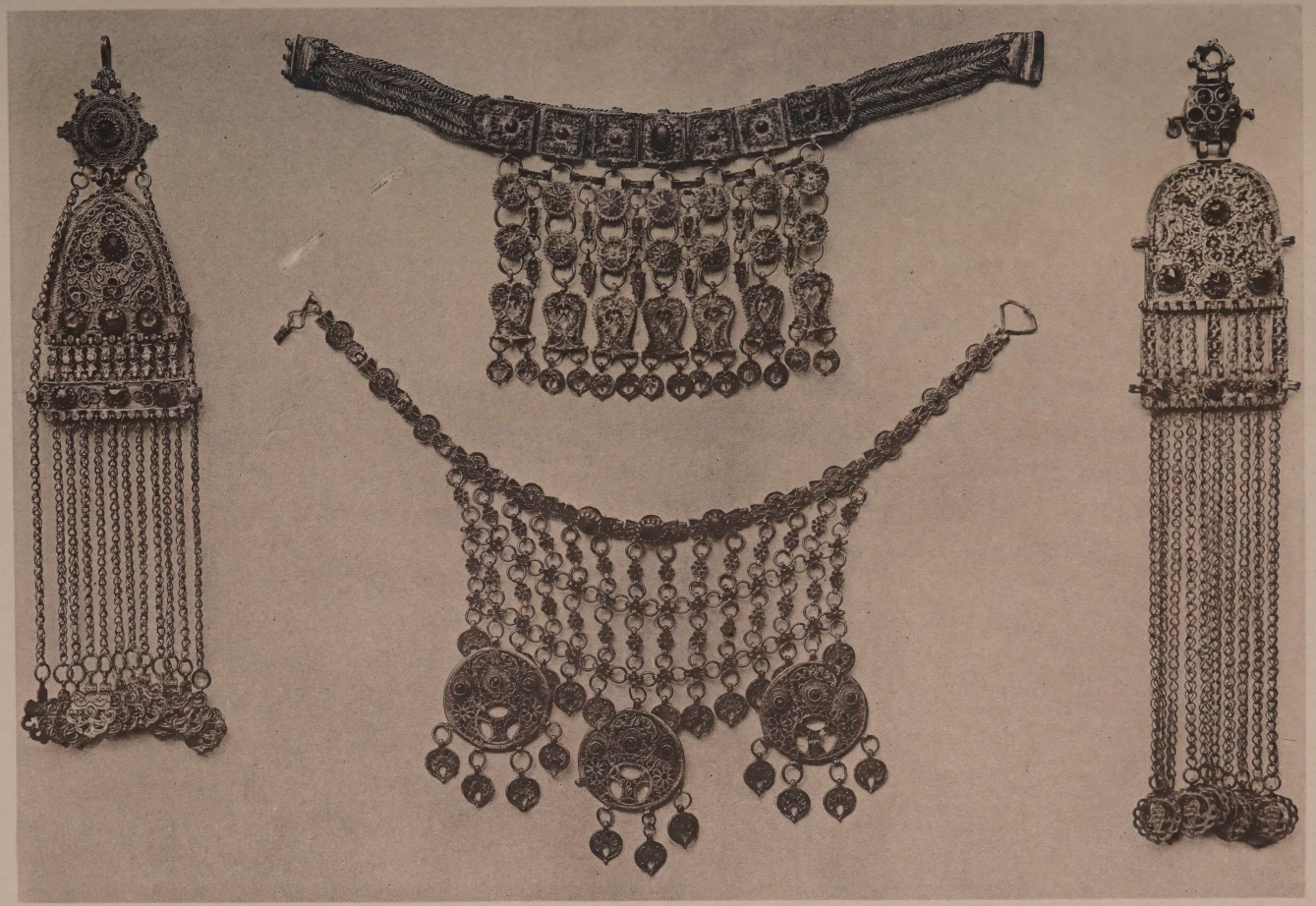
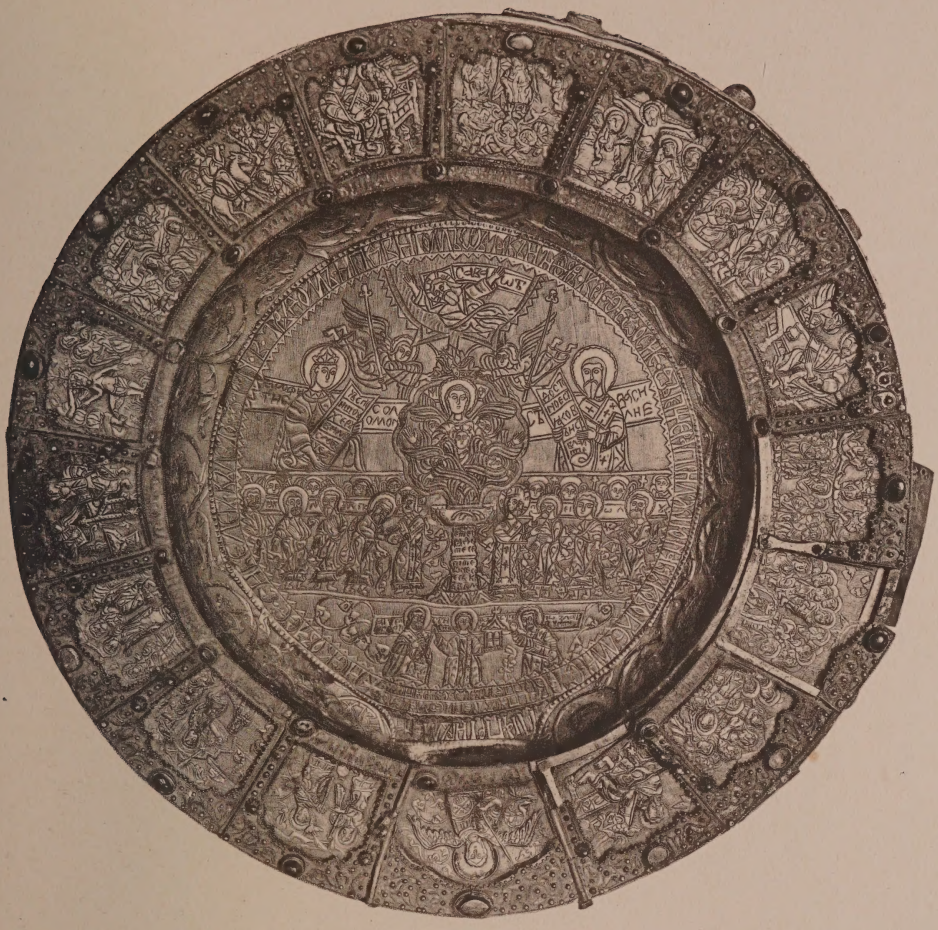
Girdle-clasps of Bulgarian national costumes; 18th—19th cent.
Sofia, Ethnographical Museum.

Metal ornaments of Bulgarian national costumes; 18th—19th cent.
Sofia, Ethnographical Museum.



Metal ornaments of Bulgarian national costumes; 18th—19th cent.
Sofia, Ethnographical Museum.



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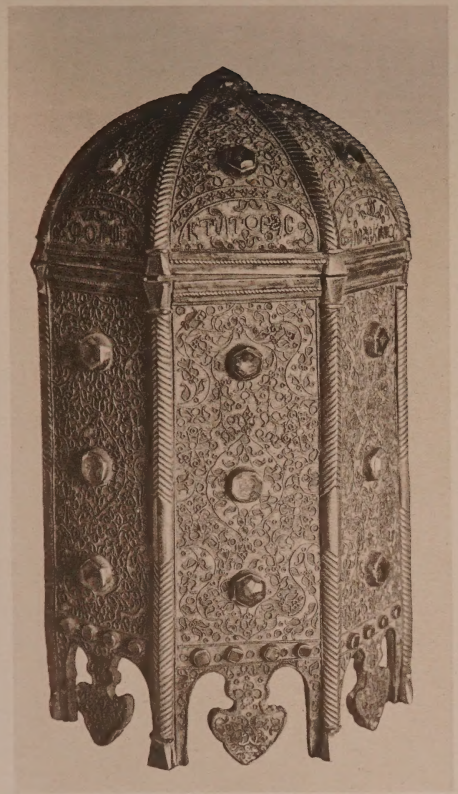
1. Silver-gilt bowl of 1644 in the monastery of Batshkovo.
2. Silver cup of 1797 in the monastery of Rila.
3. Enamelled jug in the monastery of Batshkovo; 17th cent.



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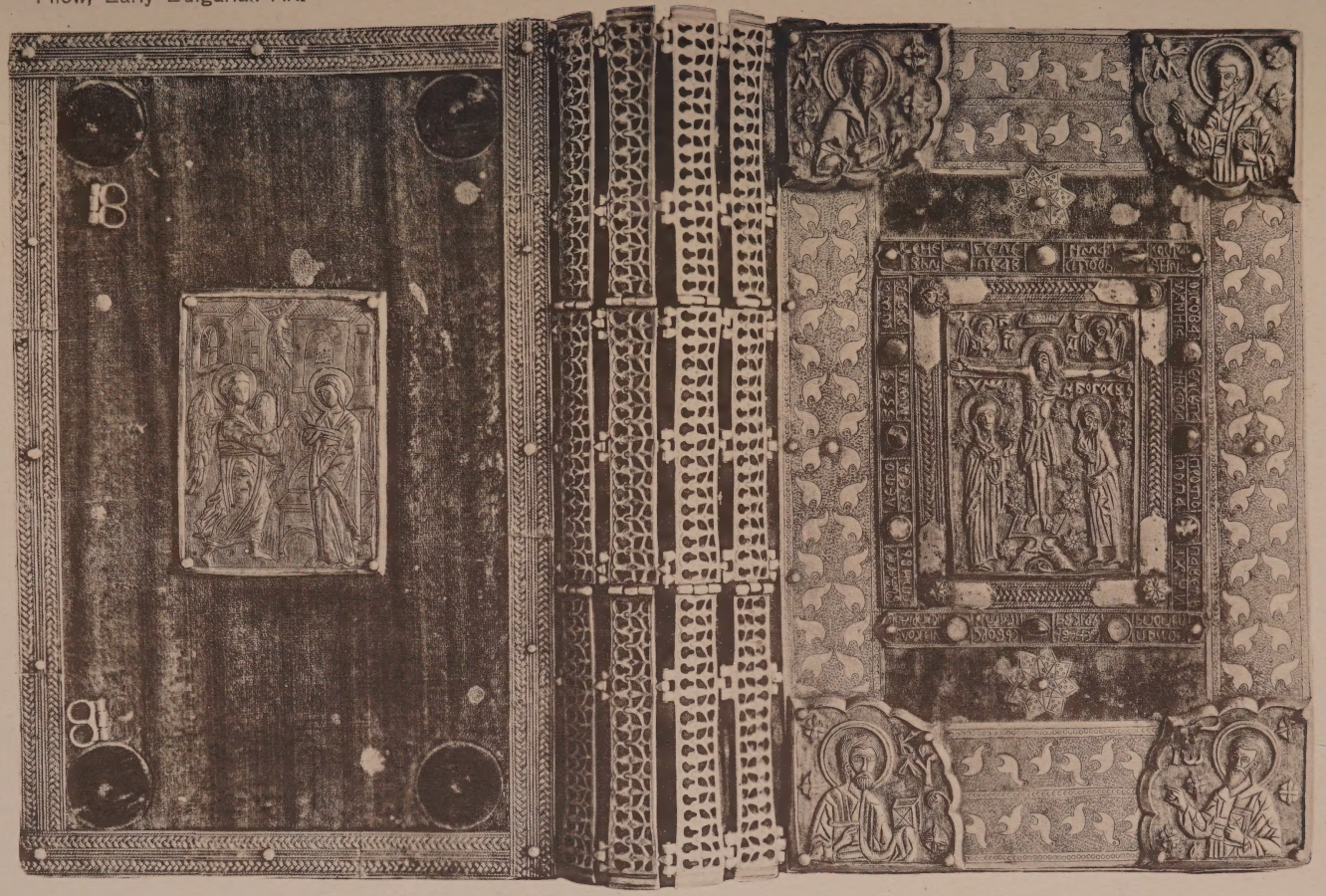
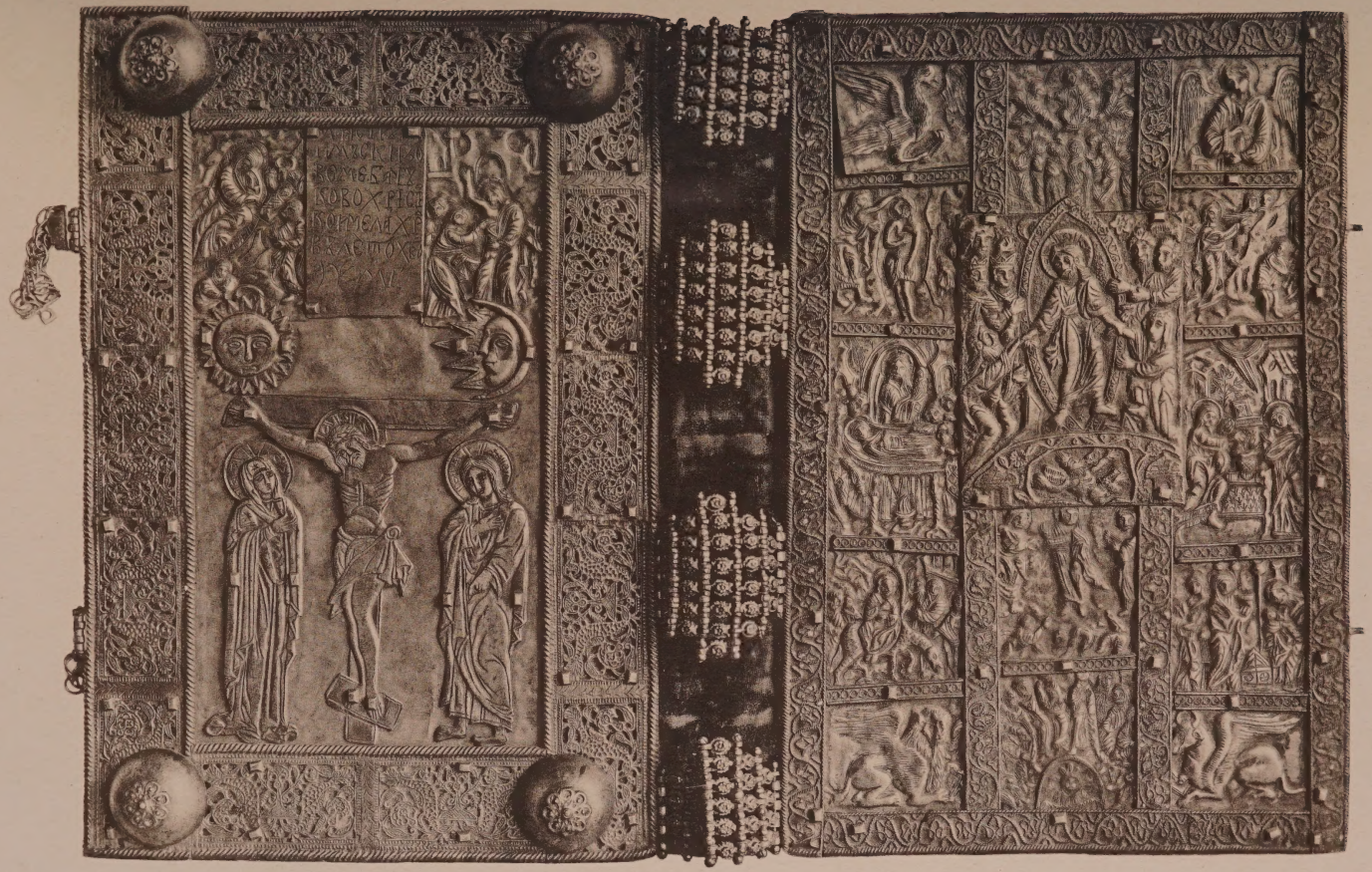
Enamelled vessels in the monastery of Batshkovo; 17th—18th cent.

Silver cross made in Tshiprovtzi; 17th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.



Cover with metal ornaments of a manuscript of 1596, from the neighbourhood of Shtip.

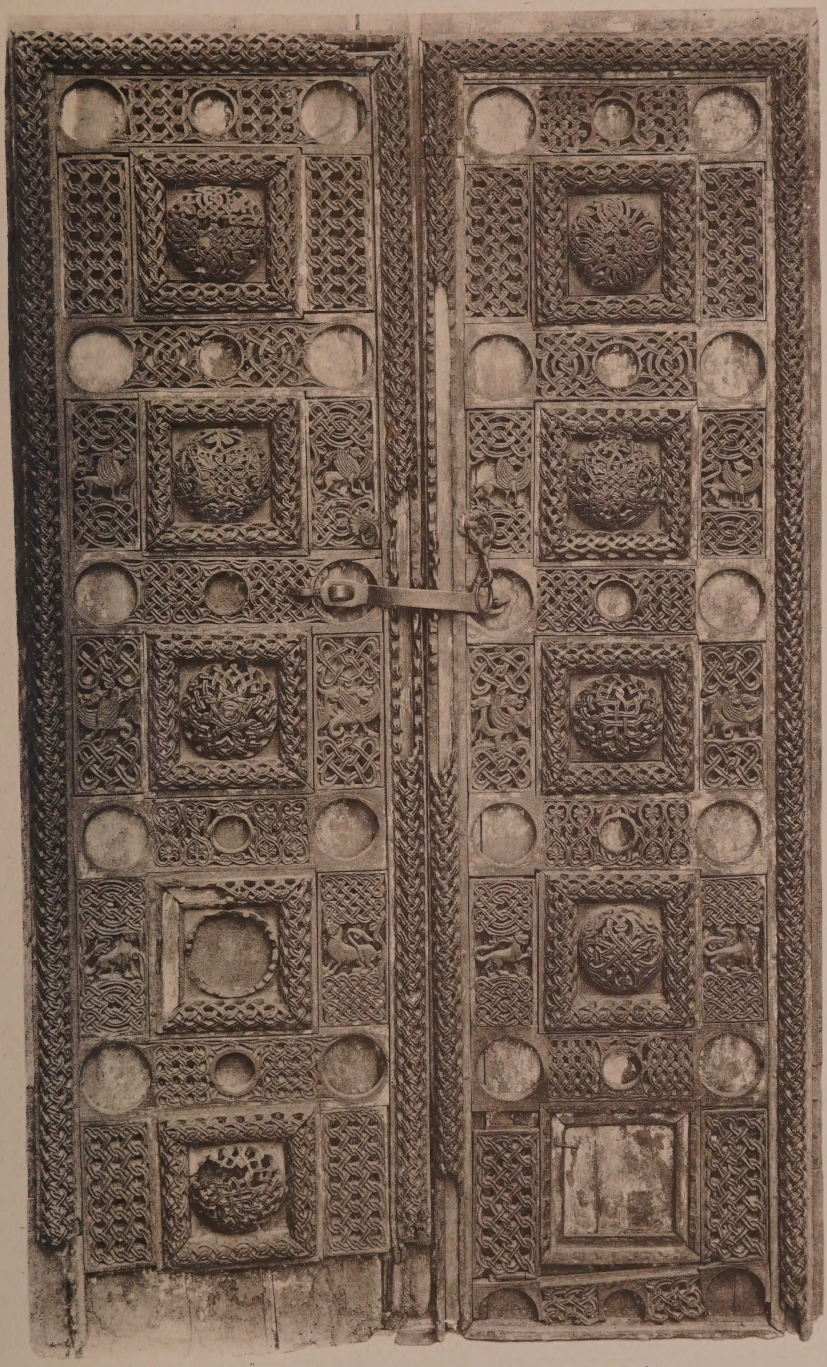
Sofia, National Museum.



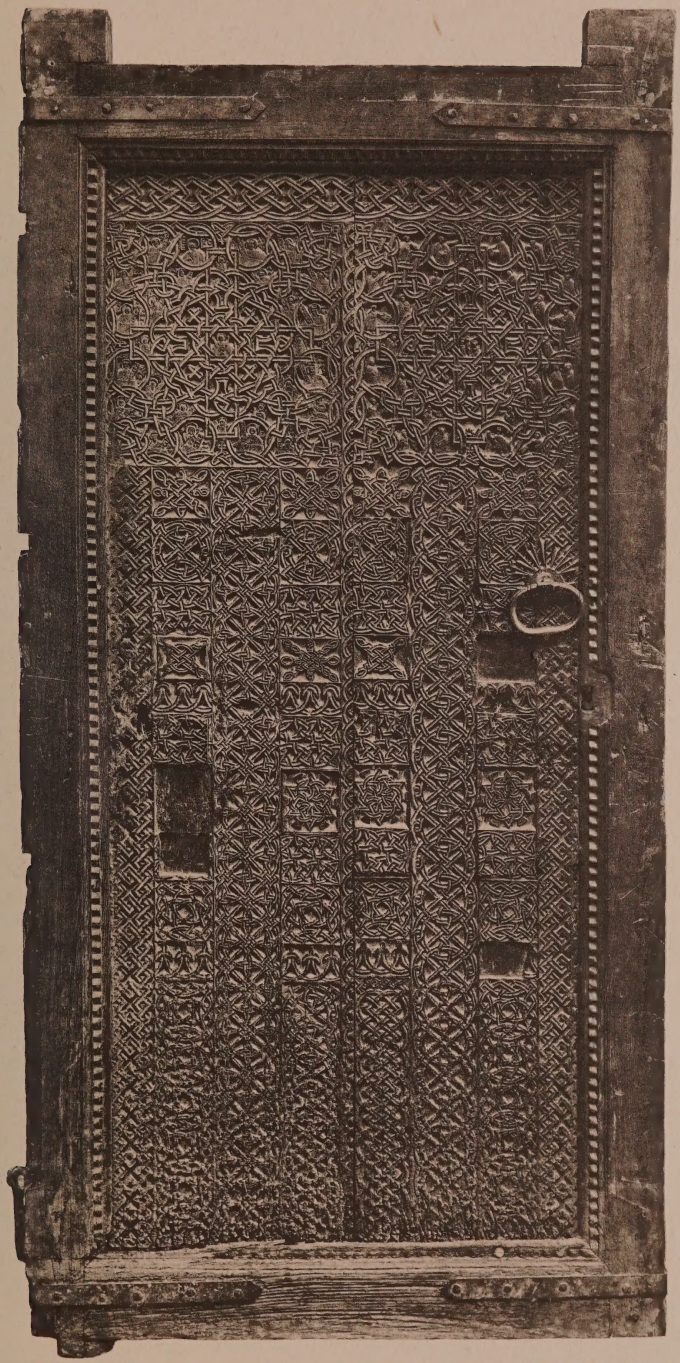
Cover with metal ornaments of a manuscript of 1743 from Philippopel.

Sofia, National Museum.

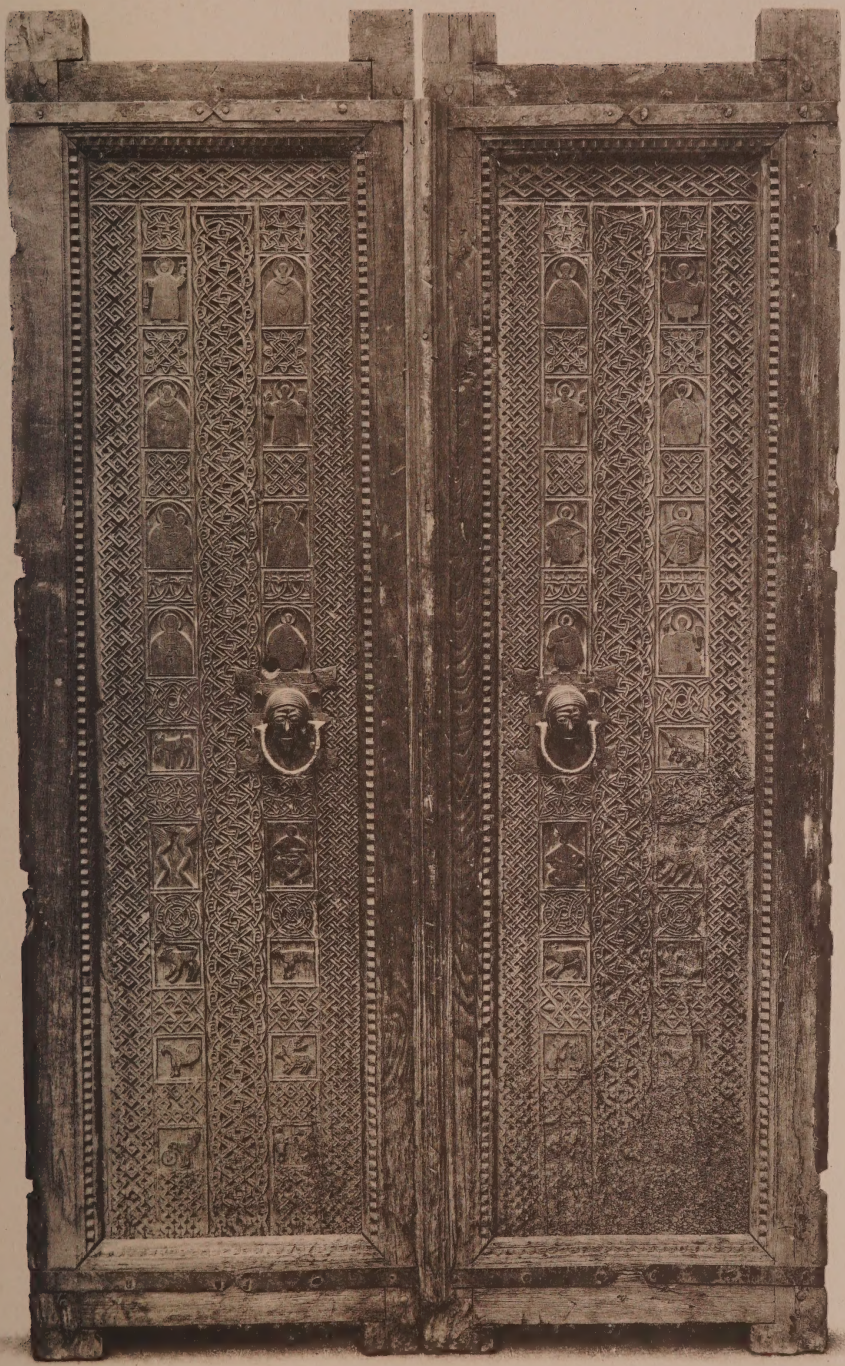
Carved wooden door in the church of St. Nicholas in Ochrida; 12th—13th cent.



Carved wooden door in the monastery of Rila; 14th cent.



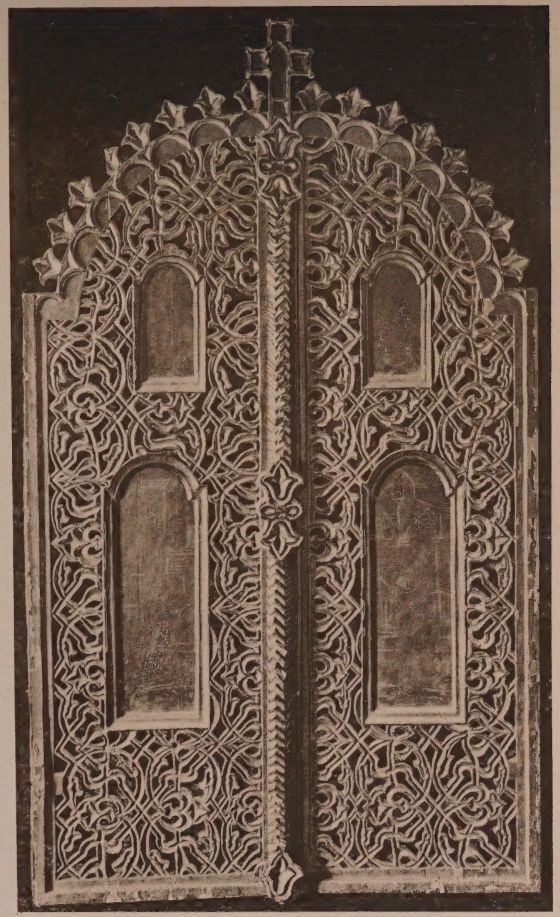
Carved wooden door of the monastery of Sleptsha; 15th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.



Carved wooden door of the monastery of Sleptsha; 15th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

1
Carved wooden door
in the church of St. Clement in Ochrida; 15th—16th cent.

2
Carved wooden door
in the church of St. Petka in Tirnovo; 15th—16th cent.



1

Carved wooden door
in the chapel of the church of Christ in Arbanassi; 17th cent.

2

Carved wooden door of Bojenitza; 17th cent.
Sofia, National Museum.

Carved wooden door in the mosque of Pazvantoglu in Vidin; end of the 18th cent.

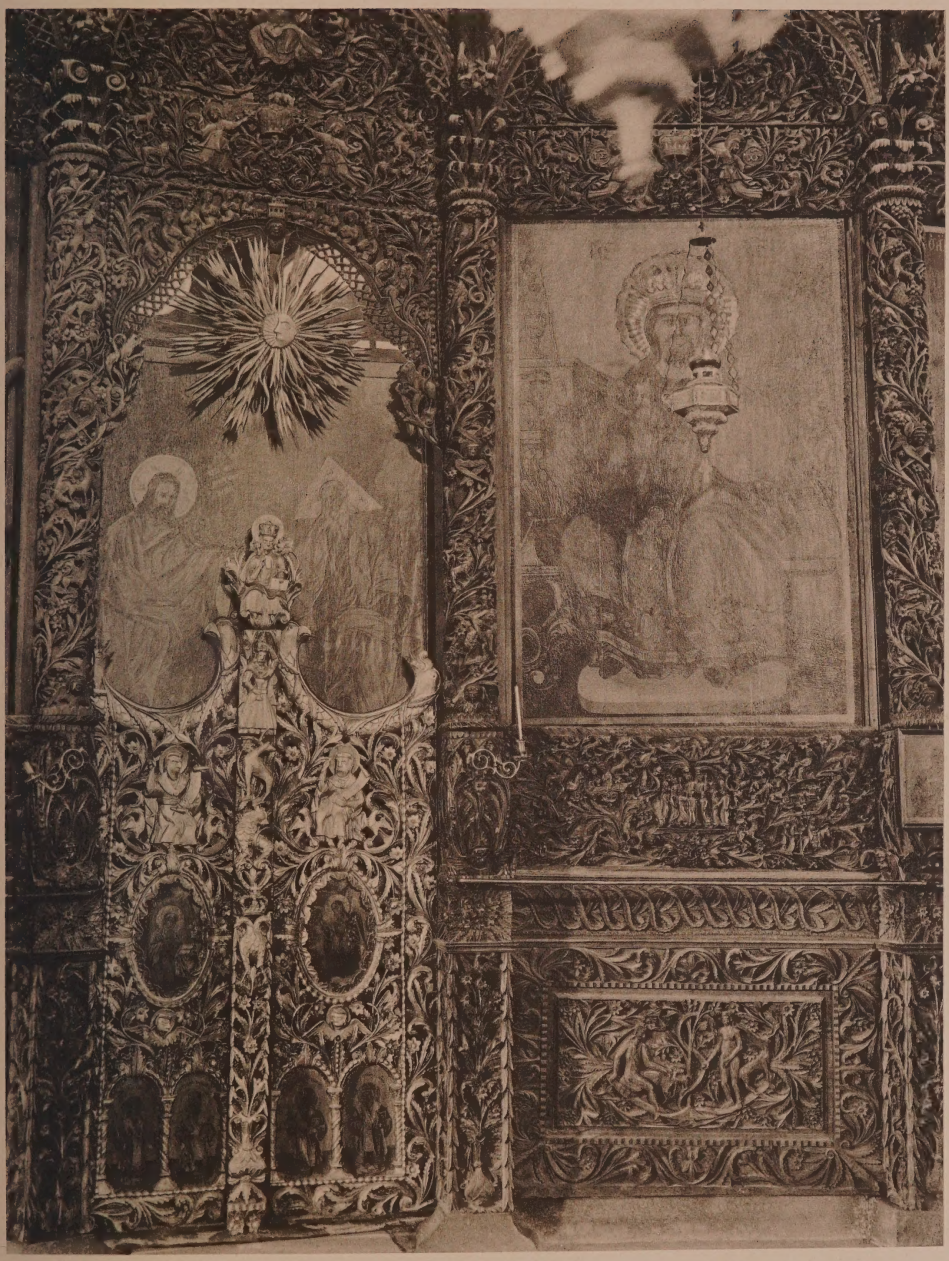
Iconostasis in the church of St. George in Arbanassi; 17th cent.

1

2

Details of the iconostasis in the monastery church of St. John of Bigor; beginning of the 19th cent.

Details of the iconostasis in the church of St. Spas in Skopie; dated 1824.



The centre part of the iconostasis in the church of the Virgin in Tatar-Pazardjik; beginning of the 19th cent.

The interior of the principal church in the monastery of Rila; beginning of the 19th cent.

Iconostasis in the principal church of the monastery of Rila; beginning of the 19th cent.

Iconostasis in the church of the Virgin in Samokov; beginning of the 19th cent.

Iconostasis in a chapel of the monastery of Rila; beginning of the 19th cent.

Picture of a saint from Patleina (glazed tiles); 10th century.
Preslav, Archæological Museum.

Sevastokrator Kaloian and his wife Dessislava.
Wall-painting from 1259 in the church of Bolana.

Czar Constantine Assen and his wife Irene.
Wall-painting from 1259 in the church of Boiana.

Christ enthroned between the Virgin and St. John Baptist
Wall-painting in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul
in Tirnovo; 14th century.

The fourth œcumenical synod.

Wall-painting in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo; 14th century.

The Death of the Virgin.

Wall-painting in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tirnovo; 14th century.

The donor Radivoi and his family.

Wall-painting from 1493 in the monastery of Kremikovtzi.

The donor George and his son Constantine.
Wall-painting from 1643 in the monastery of Batshkovo.

Czar Ivan Alexander and his family.

Miniature from the Lord Curzon gospels; 14th century (London, British Museum).

The Evangelist Mark.

Miniature from a Ms. of the gospels of the 16th—17th century (Sofia, National Museum).

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